



Learn About Miracle Men of Movies Who "MAKE NO MISTAKES"—Main Paper Feature

The Governess

The Story of an Unsung Heroine By Nolia Gardner White

EMILY WAHLENBERG came quietly into the outer office, asked at the desk for Mr. Coppard. Emily Wahlenberg was a plain person. Her face had only the redeeming feature of steady gray eyes to relieve it from complete homeliness.

"In response to the advertisement," she said quietly.

The girl looked at her coolly and said: "Oh, yes?"

Emily Wahlenberg sat down, but almost at once was told to go in—first door at the right. She stepped into Mr. Coppard's office.

Mr. Coppard was alone. He looked up sharply, said: "Come in. You are applying for the post of governess?"

She said only, "Yes."

Mr. Coppard, who both looked and was what is generally called a financial power, said, still in his abrupt though pleasant voice: "Your name?"

"Emily Wahlenberg."

"Miss Wahlenberg, there is no use in beating about the bush, so far as I can see. You are too plain."

She did not flush, but she did smile faintly. "I see," she said.

"No, you don't see—not at all," he said a little irritably. "You are no doubt thinking, Miss Wahlenberg, that I choose my son's governesses to suit my personal taste."

"Oh, not!" she said. "But perhaps your son may not need prettiness so much as you think."

He looked down at some papers, then up at her. "My son is a bunchback," he said. "His life is therefore a good deal restricted, and I should like particularly to find a governess who will satisfy him as a companion."

She smiled again that faint smile. "I should like to have a try," she said. "Would you be willing to look at my references?"

"Of course. But I feel sure that we shall not be able to come to terms."

He took two letters from her, opened them, one after the other. He looked up from them slowly. "You were with the Garretsons' daughter?"

"Yes. Seven years."

"I think I shall take you on, Miss Wahlenberg," he said abruptly. "The salary is \$250 a month—you to furnish your own lodging. Would that be satisfactory?"

"No. I must stay in the house," she answered quietly.

"Impossible! I have a large apartment—two floors, in fact—but there is no available room, except a small one off the schoolroom."

"That would be all right."

"May I ask what your objection to sleeping outside is?"

"I like to be near my charge, Mr. Coppard, at all times."

"Well, I can't have that. It is not a nursemaid's job, you know!"



Nearly Every Night Chess Men Moved to Music for a Half Hour

He took up a paper as if dismissing her. She rose. "Good afternoon!" she said quietly and turned to the door.

"Just a moment!"

She withdrew her hand from the door.

"I must confess, Miss Wahlenberg, that your references prejudice me in your favor, and I should like to have you try the job for a month or so. I don't wish to be unreasonable. I happen to know that there are vacant rooms in the apartment house next door, and I should be glad to get one of these rooms for you."

"No, Mr. Coppard, I couldn't do that. But I should be quite content with a room off the schoolroom, and I shouldn't interfere with your household arrangements."

He frowned, for he was unused to opposition, especially from women. "I suppose it could be worked out," he said a little impatiently. "Very well, then. Do you mind making it for only a month—in case either of us is dissatisfied?"

"That will be quite satisfactory."

"You might as well go at once to the house," he said. "You can send for your luggage. I shall call Mrs. Hichens, the housekeeper, and she will fix you up. My boy's name is Louis. I must confess I hope we shall get on. I am a little weary of interviewing governesses."

UPON the next to the top floor of the apartment building, Miss Wahlenberg was let in by a maid, who summoned the housekeeper.

"Mr. Coppard phoned you were coming," the housekeeper informed her.

"Does the boy expect me?"

"No, Miss. We let the boy alone mostly. Dad Mr. Coppard tell you that he—"

"Yes, he told me."

"Well, then 'twon't be, so to speak, a shock to you. But, aside from that, Miss he's very difficult to get on with. You'll see, soon enough! These are his rooms—I'll just knock. He's like to have a tantrum without I do."

Miss Wahlenberg, without touching Mrs. Hichens, seemed to withdraw the housekeeper's hand from sound.

"Never mind," she said, gently. "I'll just go in. It'll be better so."

Miss Wahlenberg opened the door, and entered a combined sitting room and schoolroom, a long, low room with a fireplace in one corner and, opposite Miss Wahlenberg, a row of small windows with a cushioned seat beneath. There was no fire in the grate, and the room, for all its elegance and furnishing, was chill and forlorn. The globe, the blackboard, the black desk, all had an air of utter cheerlessness, which centered in the misshapen figure of a boy of eleven or twelve, sitting on the window seat, and staring out at the view beneath like a small brooding gnome.

He turned quickly. He had a thin, old-looking face, with somber dark eyes and drooping mouth.

"What do you want here?" he said at once.

Miss Wahlenberg removed her gloves. Then she moved toward the window. She sat down.

"Well, here I am Louis."

The boy's dark eyes widened. "It's you!" he said.

"Yes, it's I."

"But—where's she?"

"She's dead, Louis."

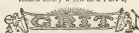
The boy stared at her unbelievably. "As soon as she didn't need me any more I came to you."

"There's no chance of my dying!" the boy said.

"No," she agreed. "I think you'll live

STORY SECTION

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to be quite old. I'm to be your governess, Louis, and I'm going to make you work very hard."

For an instant a young sweet giving-up self to love and authority lightened his moody, dark face.

"I shan't mind that," he said. "I didn't think you would. . . . Couldn't we have a fire here?"

"I suppose we could. If you'll ring that bell, Hichy'll come."

"You ring it, will you? While I take off my things?"

For an instant he did not move, but she had already risen. Was removing her felt hat from her smooth, brown hair. Past moments of deformity rising to walk past people filled the room with horror, then the horror went out of the room, and the boy moved toward the bell, rang it sharply.

A MAID brought cannel coal, lit it with gas. Miss Wahlenberg walked to the window, stood there while the maid was in the room. As soon as the maid left, she said:

"The world is very big from here!"

Louis did not answer, and presently she turned, came over to a deep chair by the fire, sat down.

"Sometimes the world's too big from anywhere," she said, and his face reddened.

He sat down on a stool and said, "How did you happen to come here anyway?"

"Well, let's not wonder about that. Let's just leave it that I'm here."

"How did she die?"

"No one ever expected she would live this long."

He sat silent, finally saying, without meeting her eyes, "I hate governesses."

"Why?"

"They don't want to come near me. They're mostly stupid, too, and make long lessons so there won't be any time left over. Do we have lessons today?"

"No. It must be nearly supper time. You'll want to get ready for that."

"There's no getting ready to do. They bring it to me here."

"You eat up here—with your governesses."

"No. By myself."

"I am going to eat with you tonight."

The boy's face grew dark and, indeed, ugly. "I don't want you to," he said.

At that moment the maid knocked at the door, opened it, and said, "Mrs. Hichens wants to know, Miss, if you'll be taking your dinner downstairs, or will you be going out?"

"I'll have it up here with Louis, if it's not too much trouble," Miss Wahlenberg said gravely.

For an instant a look of hatred flared up in the boy's eyes.

Miss Wahlenberg rose and said, "Is this the table you use?"

The boy did not answer, but Miss Wahlenberg carried the small table near the fire, brought chairs. The maid came, bearing a heavy tray. Once the food was arranged the maid left.

"All right, Louis," Miss Wahlenberg said.

Suddenly the boy made a fearful grimace and screamed out at her: "I don't want to eat with you! I won't eat with you!"

Miss Wahlenberg walked away from him, over to the window. She stood there

silently for as much as two minutes, then she said, not looking around at him, "Do eat, yourself, at any rate!"

There was no reply, and Miss Wahlenberg returned to the table, sat down, and proceeded to help herself to food.

"I've had to eat alone for a long time," she said. "I did think it would be fun, just this once at least, to eat with you!"

He crept to the table, sat down with painful defiance. "It makes my father sick at the stomach to see me at the table with him!" he said, as if he must shock her.

"I should think it would," she answered him with a smile. "You are so rude!"

His dark eyes looked at her with hideous suffering, then down at his plate.

"Oh yes, I'm rude all right!" he said.

"And perhaps I should be, too, were I you," she conceded.

He stared at her. He ate rapidly, as with the desire to be done with this which was a torture to him.

"What do you do in your evenings?" Miss Wahlenberg said.

"I think," he said with maliciousness. "I've brought a book to read to you."

She said quietly.

At that moment the maid came for the tray and to announce that Miss Wahlenberg's luggage had come.

"Luggage!" the boy said.

"I'm staying here," she said.

"The governess never stays here."

"But I am going to stay, Louis," and she went into the little room off the schoolroom.

Presently she reappeared and said, "I'll read to you a while now." She took "Bambi" from her handbag and brought it near the fire. "This is about a deer," she said.

"I don't want to hear it. I hate animal stories."

"Well, let me read a little way."

Her low voice interpreted "Bambi."

Presently she looked up. He sat on the stool, his elbows on his knees, his poor, tormented, oldish-face in his palms.

"Where is your room, Louis?"

He made a little motion toward a door at the other end of the room from hers.

"You are so tired. Why don't you go to bed?"

"Oh, I'm used enough to that! I don't want to go to bed."

She opened the book and went on reading. She read till Mrs. Hichens came and said,

"Excuse me, Miss, but Louis has to go to bed now."

"Oh, go away, Hichy. I was just going!" the boy said. He stood up and, without so much as a goodnight, made his way to his room.

After a long time Miss Wahlenberg rose quietly and went to his room. She tapped. "Are you in bed, Louis?"

"Yes."

She opened the door and stepped in. The boy's eyes were open, fixed in a wide stare. Miss Wahlenberg bent a little, smoothed his thick, dark hair.

"Can't you sleep?" she said.

"No," he answered only.

"It's bad, not sleeping," she said.

"My father hates me," he said in a tight voice.

"Yes, I know," she answered.

"You do not know?" he denied.

"Oh, yes," she said. "I do know, Louis. And yes, he hates you, I think—or per-

haps only himself. But we shall change all that, you and I! Good-night, Louis!" She leaned and kissed him.

IN THE morning there were circles under the boy's eyes. Miss Wahlenberg said, "We will walk in the park, before lessons."

"No," he said crossly. "I don't want to go out."

"Always a little walk before lessons," she answered. "Besides, it is lovely out today, for it has been snowing."

They walked in the street, the plain woman and the hunchbacked boy.

"Did you ever study snow flakes?" Miss Wahlenberg said.

"Oh, I know they're hexagonal—all that!"

"I have a microscope. We'll look at some when we get home."

When they had gone some blocks, they met a little boy of five or so who stopped stock still and stared at the hunchback. Louis' face screwed up into a spasm of bitterness. He turned sharply and said, "I'm going back now!" and began to walk faster.

She made no objection but followed at her own pace. He was up in the school-room before her.

She entered leisurely, went to her bedroom, and came back carrying a microscope. She opened a window, put out her hand, and let flakes fall on it.

"See, Louis!" she said, and the boy came reluctantly, stared through the glass at fairy forms.

"Such exquisite order!" she said. Then, as the flakes melted, she began to say in a low voice:

Order is a lovely thing:
On daisies it lays its wing,
Teaching simplicity to sing.
It has a meek and lowly grace,
Quiet as a nun's face . . .

on to the very end—of profound humility, profound wonder:

What are we? I know not.

All the time she was speaking, he stared at her with wide, fascinated eyes. Suddenly he pulled his eyes from hers and walked away from her to a chair by the hearth.

She said, "Because we lie outside the pattern, Louis, the wonder of it is none the less!"

A sound came from him then, protesting—not a word, only a sound. She came to him.

"Get up, Louis. Or move over a bit. Let us both sit here by the fire a little."

She put her arm about him. "Eleven, are you, Louis? Oh, much, much older, I know! But you are a little boy, too. But order is a lovely thing, for all you may deny it so bitterly. Louis, I am plain. You are ugly, except for your face. No one could call your face ugly, Louis. . . ."

A tremor seemed to go through his body.

"We must attain to an inner order, Louis."

Against her arm hot tears gushed.

"My child! My child!" she said. They sat then in silence for a long time.

After that time, she said, "Do you play chess?"

"No. I received some men for Christmas."

"I should like you to learn. Shall we get the men?"

Continued on Page 22

Flame of the Border

Vingie E. Roe

THE CHARACTERS AND THE PLOT

THE story opens with Dr. Sonya Savina suspended by her finger tips over 300 feet of space. Above her a man's face, young and lean and wild as a hawk's, watches her with an anxiety which brings perspiration to the temples. He begs her to catch hold of the reata which swings its loop at her shoulder. Only when he gives his word that he will not further molest her does the fast tiring girl permit herself to be pulled up to safety.

Then the young westerner tries to apologize for his mistake in judgment, but the girl dashes away on her tall black horse while he still mumbles his remorse. A few hours later she rides into the stone-flagged pail of her brother's ranch house and is greeted by Rodney Blake, of New York City, on his third visit to the West in the hope of persuading her to keep her promise to marry him.

The easterner is the guest of Serge Savarin, and he has chafed all day while his host has tended his sheep and Sonya has paid a professional call on the desperately sick wife of Two Fingers, a Navajo Indian.

CHAPTER V

ILLA agreed heartily with Sonya's plan to visit Myra Little, and two days later the girl departed on Darkness. Serge had gone down to the railroad after the forgotten sack of sugar, so that was off her mind.

She started early to avoid as much of the day's heat as possible, and made the long hard ride in good time, trotting into Myra's door yard just as she was putting dinner on the table.

Myra, a tall, gaunt woman, desert bitten of face and form but down fair inside her soul, was at her sturn before she could dismount.

"My soul alive!" she cried catching the girl's hand, "how jist isn't this a treat! Oh, Sonya, how glad I am to see you! Get down an' come in. Dinner's just ready. Buck, you come an' take Darkness an' put him up—give him some hay. Well, well, Sonya!"

She put her arm around the girl's waist and as the Indian she had called Buck came and took the horse the two women entered the wide low ranch house where the savory smell of baked mutton and potatoes scented the warm air.

"Bring your bags in here, Sonya. You'll have to sleep in my room, but this is a good wide couch an' soft as wool. Got a thick wool tick, new one. Made it this past winter. Want to wash up, so, come on out. I'll go finish settin' up."

Sonya smiled around at the cool, deep room, so plain, so comfortable, where this courageous and intrepid Myra lived her hard working life, laid her saddlebags on the couch, ran her comb through her short hair, and was ready. She would not change into the soft little dress she had brought in her bulging bags, along with a book for Myra and sundry other things, until later.

There was no formality in this land of simple living. She went out through the big room and washed at the bench on the back porch, drying on the clean roller towel Myra was hastily hanging up. The meal steaming on the table was plain but good: hot bread, the mutton and potatoes, onions sliced in vinegar, and a can of fruit opened in her honor.

There were Indians here, a woman

with a shy child of four, a half-grown girl, two men. These ate at a long table on the pleasant porch, while the two white women sat at Myra's own small table in one end of the living room. This had a white cloth, some bits of pretty china, a desert flower in a little vase. It was Myra's one daily service to herself and a woman's yearning for the niceties of life. This lone Myra who owned and ran the Black Sheep ranch.

"Oh, Sonya," said Myra happily, "I just can't tell you how good it is to see you! It's been a long time since we had a talk, an' I'm just goun' to lay off the whole afternoon for the matter. Buck, you do that cleanin' in th' storehouse I was goun' to do—an' Charlie, you fix th' lower trough where it's started to leak. Blanche, you put some beans on to

the hours pass all too slowly as Serge's wife, Lila, busies herself with the care of her little daughter, Babe, and the multiplicity of duties about the ranch house.

The pretty girl physician treats Little Moon in the began beyond Other Wash and doubtless saves her from death. Red Blake tells her he is not in sympathy with her charity work among the Indians and returns alone to the East when she asks him to wait at least six months for her definite answer regarding marriage.

After seeing her fiancé off on the train, Sonya drops in at the village store to purchase supplies for her brother's ranch. His wife has on the side of his arrogant hand, his lean lips belied, the everlasting cigarette in his fingers, the tall bronze man of Lone Mesa stalks into the store. When Miss Savarin ignores him he follows her sudors and tells her of his remorse over his actions of a few days before. The girl asks Two Fingers who he is but the Indian doesn't know although he shows her a magnificent yellow horse left with him by the stranger. The third installment follows.

some day when I'm there I'll see about the matter. Wouldn't they make the modern stuff look sick!"

"You goun' there, Sonya? Takin' a trip?" asked Myra quickly.

"No," said Sonya, "and yes. No trip. Going to stay, I guess."

"What?" Sonya moved uneasily, nodded.

"I think so," she said, turning to look at Myra gravely. "When a woman is engaged to marry a man, she goes where he lives, doesn't she?"

"Why, I didn't know—"

"No. It isn't public property, but I am. Rodney Blake, an old college friend of Serge's. Fine man."

Myra stood silent, searching Sonya's face with her clear gray eyes.

"Why, Sonya," she said presently, "how will we all ever do without you? An' yet that's only selfishness. It will be fine for you. You've lived so fast and deeply in this desert that it's only right you go back where you belong. Get the rest an' life that's comin' to you. You sure deserve it."

"Well—maybe. But now let's sit down and visit. We haven't had a real talk-
fest for months and months."

Myra pulled up a blind to let in a bit more light and the two of them sat down in the wooden rockers that dignified the place and fell to that pleasurable exchange of news and gossip, no matter how scant and unimportant, with which new-met friends entertain themselves.

Sonya heard that the Brights still farther over east had a pair of twins, and that Sam Savina, notorious border thief, had been found just across the Rio Grande crucified, a grim Mexican warning to his kind.

Also that the Servant of the Lord was coming in to the Black Sheep that very night on one of his constant journeys. The two bits of news seemed to suggest each other—the crucifixion and the gentle, half-mad old man who rode the desert country year in, year out, in the effort to save souls. Sonya had seen him a time or two before.

In her turn she told Myra of the sickness of Little Moon, of Mr. Sater and the children he had gathered in from Blue Sand Wash, and finally of the man of Lone Mesa and what had happened that day on the windswept top of the tableland.

Up-to-Date Sports

IT'S football now, but soon basketball, then baseball, tennis and golf will claim the interest of the athletic world. No matter how swiftly the seasons change, you can always feel sure that

GRIT'S SPORTS PAGE

will bring you up-to-date news and pictures of the realm of sports.

cook right away, an' Aht-shi, you wash up th' dishes. Come on, Sonya, let's go an' rest."

Sonya followed her into the darkened room beyond, which served as the best room of the house, a cool, deep place with beautiful Navajo rugs on its earthen floor, baskets and pottery on the shelf above the empty fireplace, and on its walls astonishing paintings of the desert land in oils: rich, true, glowing canvases that would have drawn their crowds in any gallery of the world. These were Myra Little's romance, her satisfying draught of beauty, her outlet for that inner fineness which found so little chance in the stark service of the sheep.

Always they struck Sonya anew with their austere magnitude, and always as now she stood before them marveling.

"It's a shame, Myra," she said now, shaking her head, "that these pictures can't be hung in New York. Maybe

"My heavens!" said Myra breathlessly as she visioned the girl hanging on the face of the precipice, "why did you take that jump?"

Sonya flushed.

"Why? Do you think I'd care to live after—after being the plaything of a drunken, renegade?"

"No, maybe not—knowin' you, I know not. But I think you were wrong, Sonya, even so. Whatever might have happened to you would have been outside your power to prevent, no fault of yours. An' think what the sacrifice of your life would have meant—you, who do good with every breath, who have the knowledge to save life, the understanding heart an' the grace of compassion! What a ghastly waste it would have been—your broken body at the Mesa's foot—your kindly soul gone from this earth which needs such a sad.

"No," she finished, shaking her head, "you should not have tried to kill yourself."

"Well," the girl laughed, "I didn't, so that's that. And, Myra, I wish you

like a man's who sees a child dying and can't help, if you see what I mean."

"I'm," said Myra, "yes, I see. Shouldn't wonder if there was a lot behind them. Much to fear an' maybe to like. I've seen their sort, an' never in a common man. Once in an outlaw at Laredo, an' once in a preacher who never should have been one."

"Well, anyway, it's ancient history, and I hope I never lay eyes on him again, the good-for-nothing," said the girl, "and now tell me about yourself. How's the ranch going?"

And Myra fell into the usual train of trivial happenings which had filled the recent months as the afternoon wore away and the sun went down the west.

"My land alive!" she cried at last. "Look at th' time! I've got to get busy. Come along."

"I will presently. Get into a dress first," said Sonya.

It was twilight when she came out into the ranch yard where Myra was feeding her chickens, and some one was coming into the round stockade corral where the big tanks shimmered with their

sometimes. I've come from Juniper Tank today."

"Whew!" whistled Myra. "That is a long trail, an' a hard one, especially for burros."

"Oh, they so well, my little fellows. They're true servants of the Word, never complaining, always willing. Their reward is certain, I'm sure. If I weren't, I'd be unhappy; they are so patient, so gentle."

He looked at Myra anxiously with his faded old dark eyes.

"Sure," said the woman hastily, "sure they'll be rewarded. Just as sure as anything."

The Servant smiled relievedly.

"I knew you'd understand, Mrs. Little," he said. "Some people don't. They smile when I tell them that. Now I'll go put up."

A little later they all sat down to a simple meal, and Sonya studied him with careful glances. She had heard so much about him.

Where he had come from, the country did not know, or where he made his habitat, or if he even had one. In rain and shine, summer's heat and winter's cold, he rode the lonely stretches on his tiny mounts, carrying his Bible and his first-aid kit.

Many a life he had saved in emergency, many a difference he had patched up; many a bit of courage he had put in some failing heart.

They called him far and wide the "Servant," shortened from "The Servant of the Lord," and he had no other name but that fantastic sobriquet. He was very old, and the rigors of his life had leached him to the bone; his pitiless suns burned his wrinkled skin to the color of old leather. But there was in his face a flame that shamed the evil out of men beholding, hard, cynical as they might be.

No one had been known to offer him anything but good in all the years he had ridden, and served, and preached his little sermons at this outfit and that. He was known among them half satirically, half affectionately, as the "Holy Chuck-line Rider," since he had no money ever, and could not have spent it with them if he had.

They put him up and fed his burros, and listened quietly, sitting at the spike-camp doors with their cigarettes in their hands, these dark, hard-riding men of cattle camp and sheep camp, while he told them of their sins and the Hope of the World that never died. How much of it went in he never knew. Since they are a silent lot, but it was not his job to know. That was to give the Word, that only.

So now Sonya watched him, smiling a little in gentle sympathy, and recalled the stories of his goodness and his unbounded courage which she had heard. A strange little old man, filled with undying zeal, his spirit a fire of evangel, like those amazing padres who had walked the West in an earlier day, he commanded the respect of all who came in contact with him—the gentle, mad old Servant of the Lord.

And presently Myra took them out in the sandy yard to sit about the doorway and rest with the dying day. After the manner of women in far places, she be-



"Good Day, My Daughter," Said the Old Man, Shaking Hands With Her, "I'm Glad to Be Here, Too"

could have seen his face. I never saw a drunken man get sober so fast in my life."

"What did he look like?" asked Myra curiously. "Was he a cowboy?"

Sonya considered.

"Well, he was dressed like one, yet I wondered what outfit he could work for, since we're all sheep over there, you know. And he was good to look at. Tall and slim-hipped, with the strangest long blue eyes I ever saw. Odd eyes that could change in a second. They were fierce at first, like a hawk's, reckless and selfish. They made me furious just to look at them."

"And then, when he saw I was in dead earnest about—about—this thing—they turned perfectly terrible with anxiety,

sweet waters from the well under the windmill.

This was a strange creature if ever there was one, that sat wearily on his little gray burro, leading another and hazing a third ahead of him—a thin, stooped figure in rusty black garments that bore about them something of the dignity of chancel and sacristy. A wide-brimmed black hat sat squarely on the head of long white hair that fell in dusty ringlets to his shoulders. The tired burros drank as if famished, and the master stepped off the one he rode, standing patiently beside it while it slaked its thirst.

Myra laid down her pan and went toward this newcomer, her hand extended.

"Hello, sir," she said, "We're glad to see you. There's plenty of feed in th' barns yonder. Put up your stock an' come on in. Supper'll soon be ready."

"Good day, my daughter," said the old man, shaking hands with her. "I'm glad to be here too. The road is long

gan to draw from him the news of the country.

How was the water at Juniper? And how did the sheep look over on Ten-Mile Flat? And were the cattle good on the Bar O range? She had heard that they were there.

Not so good, the old man said. Juniper was a good tank but getting low. He had prayed beside it for an hour by sun. It would be better soon. The rains were due in two more weeks. He had hoped to hasten their coming. The sheep were good on Ten Mile. The cattle farther over on the Bar O not so good. The gramma grass was thin this year.

So it went, and the sun went down entirely, and the vast spread of the sandy levels clothed themselves in royal purple beyond a painter's dreams. The world was a lovely place, the Servant said in his soft old voice, fit footstool for the feet of God. There was no evil in it of itself. Only man made evil. Man, with his greed and his cruelty.

Beelzebub was abroad in the land—Beelzebub and his henchman. He had seen them with his own eyes, he the Servant of the Lord in humble places.

They traveled together by night, and danger waited on them, death and danger and disaster. It had struck just across the border in that stark form hung upon a cross. It was no common thief who rotted there in the windy sun, but one who had betrayed his master. Beelzebub himself, that master, dark and cold and wicked as infernal fire. He was a power and a force not to be reckoned with or questioned.

Though several hundred miles lay between the border and this sheltered spot, still the finger of the Wicked One could reach even here. The old man shook his silver head, and the white hair flowed about it like a nimbus.

Yes, even here. He had seen shadows. Many shadows. Chief of them the Master's blue-eyed henchman. No good stayed where the blue-eyed one went by. He had heard of him across the line last year, the tall one with bronze-colored hair who was always seen when disaster was to follow. Then it had been a raid on the silver mine of Juan Gonzales, with five men shot like dogs and the good bullock carried off in saddlebags.

A sign and a symbol of disaster to follow, this tall one with the wild eyes. And he had seen him three days back riding down the trail to Red Rock Canyon on a horse of solid gold. So did the Wicked One mount his followers.

Well, it was growing late, and he was tired. The old were always tired. So he would find his blankets and sleep, if his friends permitted.

He rose and bowed with a lean grace, vague remnant of some forgotten time, and went away toward the camp he had made with his packs and his weary burros, and Sonya Savarin sat still in every atom of her body with a strange stillness. It seemed as if a hushing hand had been laid upon her spirit, something cold and sinister come down upon her like a cloud. It seemed to fall with the night and the old man's words, and presently she shivered and wrapped her arms across each other as if to shut it out. Then she shook herself and listened to Myra, who was saying how mad the Servant was,

how vague and fantastic, yet how full of the milk of human kindness, how lighted with religious zeal. For 40 years he had been known along the border with his prayers and his simple medicines and his unifying service to the lowly. A strange old creature, gentle and kind and quite, quite mad, so Myra thought.

But Sonya though he was somehow akin to her in his quixotic crusade against suffering. Only he had added sin as well.

And he seemed to have a vision. It was this prophetic vision, fitting so closely with her own sense of disaster concerning certain things, which seemed to fall upon her with so chill a touch.

Piffle! She was getting old herself! It was the night and the silence of the vast country under its great stars. What were rumors of a border bandit to her? A dark renegade who crucified his double-crossers and raided mines! Nothing. She would forget the chill it gave her. She'd be all right when day came again.



"Is There Anything, Any Single Thing, That
a Man Can Do to Prove His Word?
Tell Me, and I'll Do It!"

And so she was, visiting with Myra, laughing and happy, watching the little old Servant ride away, his saddlebags bulging with Myra Little's generous gifts of food.

SHE stayed two days at the Black Sheep and left early on the third, much to Myra's dissatisfaction, who held her hand as she leaned from Darkness' saddle and talked till the last minute.

"It's been too short a visit," Myra said earnestly, "an' only seems a taste, but I'm glad you made it, Sonya, even for this long. Don't stay away so long again. I can't get away like you can, you know that, an' your coming's like a breath of cool wind on a hot day. An' you must do what you think best about that New York question, of course, though this country, as I said before, will be mighty empty without you. You're welcome at the Black Sheep at any time. Hope you'll come again. Well, so long, honey."

Your face is a flower, Sonya, a sweet dark rose! Goodby, an' good luck—always."

CHAPTER VI

AT THE home ranch she found two air-mail letters from Rodney Blake, which completed her entire return to the commonplace. Rod was nothing if not practical to the bone, and his scarily accurate accounts of his plunge back into business life after his sojourn in the wilderness, as he always called Arizona, were sharp, interesting and up to the minute.

Sonya smiled as she read them, and for the first time it seemed as if there might be a charm or two in the great city he depicted so colorfully.

She rode over to Chee Wash to see Two Fingers and Little Moon the next day and found the Indian woman up, and about the simple matters of her hogan, her rug, and her family.

It gave the girl a thrill to see her so, the flush of joy that such vindication of her work

always brought. She got no money for her ministrations, and Rodney Blake had repeatedly pointed out that very fact with forceful logic, but she did not care. There was something in the knowledge that she had saved a life that made her one with the great work of creation itself. She was poor as the goods of this world went, they were all fairly so, Serge and Lila and little Babs, but she felt very rich inside her, arrogantly rich, and she could smile up at the blue heavens with a secret sense of fellowship.

So she left her last instructions with the little family at the hogan, patted the cheek of the youngest round-eyed child, and rode away erect in her saddle and

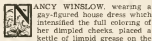
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THE advertisements in this issue of GRIT are full of opportunities for agents. Men and women are wanted to sell almost any article of clothing, household utensils and labor-saving devices. Read the advertisements carefully, then, answer those which appeal to you.

French Fries for Supper

Help to Avert Disruption of a Family

By Fred K. Barber



NANCY WINSLOW, wearing a gay-colored house dress which intensified the full coloring of her dimpled cheeks placed a kettle of limpid grease on the hot part of the kitchen range. With a sharp paring knife, she set about cutting in strips a pan of freshly peeled potatoes.

Invariably this homely task brought a tender, reminiscent light to Nancy's eyes. Out of tense, hurried minutes of her crowded routine, she still snatched the time for this little luxury that had been a delightful commonplace of the old days. There was nothing Chet loved more than French-fried potatoes.

But now the bright blue eyes had darkened to brooding violet, as she dumped the long strips into the wire basket, and lowered it into the simmering grease. The hot, savory odor brought memories of gay little dinners she and Chet had so often enjoyed in the bright restaurant near their apartment. That was soon after their marriage, before Chet had lost his job as bookkeeper at the oil company, and when she still had been working.

The oil company had gone on a cash basis, and no longer needed a bookkeeper. Chet had tried—there simply weren't any jobs. He had made a little money pumping gas and greasing cars at night, but it had taken Nancy's pay checks for the rent and grocery bills.

When his father had died, leaving the heavily mortgaged farm, with its shabby house and run-down buildings, it had seemed to Chet the only way out—for them to move on the farm and make the best of it.

Nancy dreaded the thought of farm life. She had lived for the bustle and precision of the business office where she was a competent secretary. She loved the gay dances, the theaters, the fun of eating out. The relief from cooking from dishes from keeping house.

It had been her suggestion that they stay in the city and make her money do until Chet found something. She'd rather work than not, anyway, she insisted. She had always worked. But Chet couldn't stand for that. He grew moody and morose, hounding the agencies and reading the want ads. Finally she had given in.

Nancy lifted the wire basket out of the grease, and held it a moment to drip. The door pushed open, and Larry Chet's splendid collie, named in Chet's honor, his shoulders a broad, solid beam from which his arms curved down to support the foaming pails of milk. He didn't look like the sort of man to sit all day behind an adding machine, Nancy admitted, as she flashed him a smile.

"Boy, boy!" He sniffed the air hungrily.

"Hurry and separate," she admonished. "So we can eat while things are hot."

She held a pitcher under the cream spout, to catch the rich purring gold for their supper coffee. Leaning a little wearily against the door jamb, she watched the flexing of rhythmic muscles as his bare arm turned the whining machine. There was a tan in his cheek, a brightness to his eye, that had not been visible a year ago.

"How did the land plow?" she asked, when he had settled down to look at the mail, while she was getting things on the table. Not that she really cared; but it made him happy to think she took an interest in the field work.



Chet, Carrying Two Pails of Foaming Milk, Followed His Dog

"Dry. But we'll have rain before long," he answered with a swift smile.

He was fingering a long envelope, that had lain unopened since morning. Nancy knew it was from the insurance company—the company that held the loan on the farm.

Chet drew out the thin fold of paper. Carefully, slowly, he read the letter. Nancy set the plate of potatoes on the table. She was glad she had French-fried them, and that she had used a clean, white tablecloth.

Chet spoke listlessly: "The company hasn't decided what to do about the mortgage. They may foreclose. A committee is coming tomorrow to inspect the farm."

"You've kept the interest up. Surely they'll take that into consideration."

"I hope so. Paying that interest has kept me from painting the buildings and rebuilding the fences. That won't go over so good."

"Cheer up fellow!" Nancy summoned all her possible gaiety into the tone, and went to lean over the back of his chair and run her fingers through the crisp, straight hair.

"You haven't told me that for so long," he said softly. "You used always to say that, when I came in tired and discouraged from trying to find a job."

He drew her down, and she sat cupping his clean-cut jaws between her palms, and feeling his breath ruffle her hair.

"Sometimes I wonder if you have the confidence in me you used to have."

"If I didn't, would I have come out here with you?"

"That was a year ago; things have gotten worse instead of better. You've gone without so much you would have had, earning your own money."

"I've had you!"
She jumped up, remembering that biscuits would be soggy, and potatoes would lose their crunchiness.

"Will I have to get dinner for those inspector hoboes tomorrow?" she wanted to know, as she poured the coffee.

"I suppose so." A thoughtful expression came over his features. "A good meal might help put the thing across."

Nancy sighed. "How many will there be?"

"Five. Four men and one woman."

"A woman! Oh, Chet," she moaned.

He looked up in surprise. Of course he couldn't see the difference. That the whole house would have to be cleaned, the best china put to use, the silverware polished.

"And that meat will have to be canned in the morning. It will simply spoil if it isn't!"

He did seem to understand, after all. "I'll help you," was his promise. "We can take care of the meat tonight, and have it out of the way."

After supper he went to turn out the cows. When he returned his forehead was ridged. "That Holstein cow is sick—pretty badly bloated. I'll have to do what I can. Can't afford to call a veterinarian unless I have to."

So Nancy canned the meat alone, and while she waited for the pressure cooker to heat, she swept and dusted by the

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Brass Commandments

Charles Alden Seltzer

LEADING UP TO THIS INSTALLMENT

UPON his return from the East, where he has spent the last five years, Stephen ("Flash") Lannon learns from his foreman, Tom Yates, that cattle rustlers have been depopulating his herd. It is pretty well established that the desperadoes are led by a dandy named Campan, whose lieutenants are Devake, Bannack, and Tularesa. Stephen meets Gloria Stone, who is running the Bosque City Hotel in the absence of her father, and mistakenly develops a liking for the beautiful girl.

Ellen, secretly enamored of Lannon, hides her true feelings under an exterior which she strives to make disagreeable to the young rancher. She is somewhat jealous of Ellen Bosworth, daughter of a wealthy ranch owner.

"Flash" Lannon reverts to his old role of a two-gun man, lightning fast on the draw. Mounted on his magnificent horse, Pecosier, he sets out to put the fear of death in the hearts of the lawless element that has been making miserable the life of the honest rancher. He posts a notice in Bosque City warning the outlaws to keep away from the

Bosque Grand. It is a brass commandment, revolver cartridges heading the warning.

The rustlers defy Lannon and drive off 300 head of his cattle. Stephen meets Campan in Bosque City and the two go for their guns. "Flash" had previously warned the bandit chieftains that the first time he met him he'd mar his beauty, the second time he'd cripple him, and the third time he would shoot to kill. True to his promise, Lannon ceases Campan's career with a bullet.

Ellen Bosworth has learned that Clearwater, a rancher, is in league with the rustlers. He tries to hold her prisoner but she escapes with Stephen's aid. The latter promises to let off Clearwater if he will aid in rounding up the band of outlaws. Shortly afterward Clearwater tells "Flash" the rustlers are planning a raid on a certain part of his herd. Lannon learns he has been deceived when he visits another part of his range and finds a large number of his cattle slaughtered. He rides alone to Clearwater's ranch and sees four of the outlaws sitting with the rancher in the ranchhouse. Now an exciting episode.

CHAPTER XXI



TULAROSA was sitting in a chair that was tilted back against the south wall of the room. Near him, straddling a chair, facing its back, his arms crossed and his body leaning forward until his chin rested on his crossed arms, was Bannack. Lally was standing near the wall close to the door through which Lannon had seen the light when he had looked into the rear window. Within touch of Lally, seated in a chair, was Bolton. Bolton was leaning back, his arms folded, his legs extended in front of him, crossed.

Clearwater was standing. His back was toward Lannon. Though Lannon could not see Clearwater's face, he knew the man was violently agitated. His huge body seemed to be quivering. His hands were clasped behind him, and they were continually in movement. He would grip the right hand with the left, and then the left with the right. Then he would open both hands and spread the fingers wide, as though he meditated clutching at something in front of him but was beset with a mighty indecision. His huge shoulders were jerking with a spasmodic motion; he kept moving his feet and swaying his body from side to side.

The other men betrayed no agitation whatever. In fact, they seemed amused at Clearwater's agitation. Bannack, with his chin resting on his arms, was facing Clearwater. His eyes were aglitter with some subtle emotion; there was a strange menace in the set smile on his lips. Tularesa, seated beside Bannack, was watching Clearwater intently, malice plain in his cold eyes. Lally, standing near the wall close to Bolton, was idly caressing his chin and watching Clearwater with strange steadiness; while Bolton, seated in a chair, kept a speculative gaze upon the big man.

There had been no sound in the room when Lannon had arrived at the window. He gathered that he had reached the window during a pause in a conversation. It seemed to him that a question had been put to Clearwater and that the other men were waiting for him to answer.

Clearwater's agitation resulted, it seemed, from his inability to answer or from a desire to equivocate. He stood,

swaying his body, clasping and reclasping his hands. He was completely harried.

"Well, Clearwater, I reckon you got a mouth!"

This was Bannack. His was a cold snarl.

"Boys," said Clearwater thickly, "it ain't so! Whoever says he saw me talkin' to Lannon that day is a miserable liar!"

"Not talkin', Clearwater, though you was seen doin' that on the day you chased Ellen Bosworth through the basin. I reckon a man can talk to another man, all right, an' mebbe that wouldn't be no harm in it. But it's a different thing when you go to runnin' errands for him."

"Bannack, it ain't so. Tell me about any errand I run for Lannon?"

"Clearwater, you ain't a hell of a success as a liar," said Bannack coldly. "Right now yore face is givin' you away. It's known that the day you chased Ellen Bosworth you met Lannon an' talked to him. Right after that Lannon rode to Bosque City, while you rode over to Salt Canyon an' delivered some sort of a message to Barkwell!"

"It ain't so!" declared Clearwater. "I was headin' toward the cache. An' I run into Barkwell an' the Bosque Grand boys. I didn't say ten words to Barkwell, just enough to make him think I was ridin' down that way to look for strays."

"Uh-huh," grunted Bannack. "An' the next day Lannon an' his bunch of coyotes find the cache an' drill Bill an' swing Mex Edwards! Haw, haw, haw, Clearwater! Look at your face now!"

"Boys, I swear—"

"If you didn't tell Lannon about the cache, how did he find it?" asked Tu-

laresa slowly. "It's been there a hell of a while, an' nobody ever found it."

"Damn it, boys, how do I know?" returned Clearwater. Even to Lannon, who was now beginning to understand that Clearwater had not played the traitor to him after all, the man's voice was unconvincing.

"Shucks, Lem," drawled Lally, "you ain't been puttin' nothin' over on us. We've had some one ridin' sign on you for a considerable spell. We're able to tell you what you've been doin' right along. For instance, you was talkin' to Lannon no later than this mornin'."

Clearwater's body seemed to leap. His hands dropped to his sides. His manner, his expression, must have revealed his guilt to the men; for they exchanged significant glances, and all smiled. They seemed hugely amused, but there was something sinister in their mirth, a menace that they tried to suppress.

Lannon got the impression that they were playing with Clearwater, that they were baiting him, deliberately delaying, enjoying the man's terror.

"I reckon you ain't denyin' that, Clearwater?" said Lally.

"Boys, I stopped at the Bosque Grand on my way to Bosque City. I didn't speak three words to Lannon."

"What made you ride that way if you didn't want to say more than three words to Lannon?" asked Bannack.

"What was there three words, Lem?" Clearwater evidently had become so terrorized by the threatening presence of the men that he could not lie plausibly. He said lamely, his voice a mere hoarse whisper:

"I reckon I've clean forgot."

"So you've forgot!" laughed Tularesa. They all seemed to be amused beyond reason by Clearwater's answer. It seemed they were not laughing at Clearwater's answer at all, but at something the answer suggested to them. Illumination came to Lannon when Bannack ceased laughing and spoke to Clearwater.

"Lem," he said, "you're the darndest bungler this side of hell! You can't even tell a lie straight. You want me to tell you why you rode over to see Lannon today? You wanted to tell him that we was goin' to raid his cattle at Little Elk tonight. That's why you rode over there, you coyote!"

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"Bannack, I didn't do no such thing. I tell you—"

"Shet up, Clearwater!"

The words snapped out of Bannack's mouth. Clearwater shivered under their impact as though he had been struck violently in the face.

This time the men did not laugh at him, but sat or stood, motionless in their places, gazing at him with steady hostility. It was as though Bannack's words were a signal for the men to drop their masks of affected jocularity and become serious.

They were now watching Clearwater as a hungry wolf-pack watches its prey, waiting for the signal to attack. Lannon saw Clearwater's legs tremble. It was evident he felt the hopelessness of the situation.

"Clearwater, we knowed you was workin' with Lannon," went on Bannack. "We made thet that talk about Little Elk for a purpose. That purpose was to fool you an' Lannon. It fooled you, because you rode right over an' told Lannon about it. Thet's proved because this afternoon Bolton saw a lot of Bosque Grand men hidin' themselves in Little Elk Basin. It fooled Lannon, for Lannon wouldn't have took his boys down in Little Elk to wait for us if he hadn't believed yore talk. Clearwater, you was figgerin' to get us wiped out by Lannon's outfit! You've been a traitor right along!"

Clearwater did not answer, but he began to move backward.

"Clearwater! Stand still!"

Bannack was speaking again. He got slowly out of his chair, his glittering eyes fixed upon Clearwater's with a terrible steadiness. He seemed oblivious to every one else in the room; there was a singleness of purpose in his eyes, in his manner. He pushed the chair out of his way, so that it slid along the floor, overturned, and crashed against the floor near the wall. He took several steps toward Clearwater and then began to back slowly away from him as though measuring distance. He meant to kill Clearwater.

Lannon knew the signs. He ran around to the front of the house, stepped lightly upon the veranda, and moved stealthily forward until he stood just outside the open door, a little to one side so that he could not be seen by the men in the room.

Bannack was talking again, and while listening to him Lannon swiftly withdrew from the black-handled gun at his right hip the two cartridges he had still in reserve for Campan. He dropped them into a pocket and reloaded the weapon from his cartridge-belt.

His grim preparations completed, he listened to Bannack.

"You an' Lannon have been playin' a slick game," said Bannack. "But I reckon you ain't as slick as you thought you was. Lannon busts Throne for sayin' a word about thet that female, Glory Stowe. Lannon's been buzzin' around that, tryin' to horn in. Well, Glory is Devake's girl. He's been runnin' her for more'n a year. We're out to make Lannon squirm, an' we'll do it. We drilled about 200 head of Lannon's stock to-night in Bear Flat, an' we drilled a guy named Bannack for good measure. We'll

get Lannon before we're through! I'm tellin' you this so's you'll know what's goin' on before you get to whar I'm goin' to send you! Haw, haw, haw!" he laughed. "Thet touches you, don't it, Lem. Well, Lannon will be touched to-morrow. Thet'll be mournin' in his camp when he finds out tomorrow that Devake has took Glory Stowe to the desert cañon! Devake's takin' her tonight! He's got old Stowe away so's there won't be any hitch. He's goin' to Bozzam City before mornin' an' he's goin' to—Hah!"

Bannack's exclamation caught in his throat, came out a shriek of fear and amazement. Lannon was standing in the doorway. His body was in a crouch, a wan light was in his eyes, and the two black-butted guns were in his hands.

Lannon stepped a little way into the room. Bannack stood, pallid of face, tense, staring at him. Bannack's hands were raised above his head, where they had gone immediately upon Lannon's appearance in the doorway. Lally had not

his gun, stealthily, lest he precipitate the action before Lannon would it. He watched the men warily, eagerly.

"Bannack!" said Lannon, "you've been doing the most talking. I'm getting you first! You and your gang of buzzards have done a bad night's work. You've been swaggering around the basin, robbing people and murdering innocent men. You've made folks think you're bad. You've got reputations as gun-fighters; you've scared the honest people in the basin half to death. You've had your own way too long; you've got too arrogant. I'm the law right now, and I've pronounced sentence on you. But I'm giving you a chance. You think you are gun-slingers. I've got my guns out. There are four of you. If you're as good as you think you are, one of you ought to get me. Flash them!"

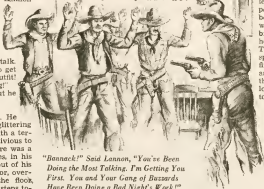
With the downward sweep of his arms Bannack tumbled forward, seemingly to meet a flame-spurt that darted from Lannon's left side. Lally appeared for an instant to be pinned against the wall by another stabbing flame-streak; then he pitched forward. Tularosa's gun came out spouting fire. But the fire streaked forward as Tularosa crumpled, the gun falling from his loosening fingers. Bolton was dragging at his

weapon before Lannon gave the word. He never got it out, for Clearwater, who was watching him with hating eyes, shot him before the muzzle of the weapon cleared the holster.

For an instant Lannon stood, peering downward through the acrid smoke that floated heavily in the room. Then, with a grim look at Clearwater, he wheeled, leaped out of the doorway, and ran around the house. He found Polestar where he had left him, leaped on his back, and sent him down along the side of the house toward the basin.

Polestar fled through the basin lightly, responding instantly to his rider's mood, which seemed to him to call for speed. He followed the course that had been taken by Ellen Bosworth in her ride to escape from Clearwater, a stretch of high ground that led northward to the upland slope. He went up the slope with long, cat-like leaps, lightly, as though unhampered by the weight of the man on his back. Stretching out on the level he fled eastward.

Shaken, trembling, Clearwater had come to the door of the ranch-house. He had not recovered from the shock of his deliverance, and he had gone from one to the other of the bodies of the men who lay in grotesque positions in the front room amazed, incredulous, seeking to vindicate the judgment of his senses. The men were dead; he had stood there when Lannon had appeared in the doorway; he had seen Lannon's guns blazing; his own had roared death



"Bannack!" Said Lannon, "You've Been Doing the Most Talking. I'm Getting You First. You and Your Gang of Buzzards Have Been Doing a Bad Night's Work!"

to Bolton. And yet it seemed to him that this thing could not have happened, that it had not happened.

It had seemed to him that with the four men confronting him there had been absolutely no chance of his escaping death at their hands. He had not, when confronting them, even thought of attempting to fight them.

Then Lannon had appeared in the doorway, his guns had flashed, the men had withered in their tracks, died; and Lannon had gone. It had all happened in an instant; swiftly, surely had Lannon wrought the terrible magic of the black-handled guns.

From the doorway Clearwater saw Polestar bounding along the rim of the basin, slipping eastward, a silver projectile in the white moonlight. Clearwater thought of Bannack's words about Gloria Stowe, and he laughed aloud as he watched the silver shape glide over the mesa.

"Devake," he said, "if you knowed what I know you wouldn't be hangin' around Bozzam City this night! What a man! What a horse!"

He turned back into the house.

CHAPTER XXII

POLESTAR went down the far slope of the mesa carefully, snorting his disgust of the smother of dust that enveloped him, tossing his head in contempt of the boulders that, dislodged by his hoofs, rolled down the slope ahead of him. He took no notice of Lannon's voice, nor of Lannon's gentle patting hand on his neck or flanks. Nor did he betray any sign that he knew Lannon was on his back.

When he reached the bottom of the slope he leaped forward, made the three or four-mile run across the basin, mounted the upland where Clearwater had been overtaken while pursuing Ellen Bosworth, and threaded the range of hills in which Ellen Bosworth had disappeared that day. Beyond the hills was another plain, grass-covered vast. He ran easily, smoothly, steadily, seemingly without effort, with a great, long, powerful undulating movement, his flexible muscles working with machine-like regularity.

Once again they came to a slope, to the end of the great table-land over which they had thundered. One minute before the plain had stretched before them smooth and unbroken, seeming to extend many miles eastward; the next minute Polestar was pausing on the brink of a steep slope above a dark, wide valley. He sank into it without urging, without hesitation, and slid down until he reached the floor of the valley. He made slow progress through the dark aisles of the forest through which the dim trail led; he had to pick his way down the sloping walls of gorges that loomed suddenly before him, and a broad river that flowed through the center of the valley he had to ford with care lest he sink into a quicksand into which he had stepped in the old days.

But soon he had left these hazards behind and was again running an upland covered with sage and mesquite, which led to the continuation of the table-land

he had traversed. When he reached the crest of the upland he halted. He was now breathing hard, and he stood for some seconds with braced legs, shivering breath into his lungs.

Lannon did not urge him, though Lannon was tortured by a conviction that he would be too late to save Gloria from Devake. He sat in the saddle, staring ahead into the vast eastern space, aware that he still had many miles to ride and that the moon had risen until his shadow was short behind him.

His pulses leaped with a savage joy when Polestar tugged impatiently at the reins and was off, at first slowly and then gradually increasing his speed until he was running as smoothly and easily as before.

Lannon was strangely glad that he had reached the Star in time to prevent Bannack and the others from killing Clearwater. He had always liked Clearwater, and it had been a shock to him

believed Clearwater guilty. Clearwater's innocence would never have been known.

Bannack, Tularosa, Lally, Bolton. At a stroke the four had been eliminated. Two still remained. Devake he would kill before the night was over, provided the man did not strike before he reached Bozzam City. If not tonight, then later. Devake was doomed. If the man succeeded in getting Gloria away he would ride his trail until he found him. That task would fill his time. Devake must die. It would make no difference whether or not he succeeded in his designs on Gloria. He had presumed to think of her, had laid plans against her. Therefore he was doomed.

Lannon's thoughts ran with terrible definiteness to the task before him. He began to peer eagerly into the eastern distance, against the ghostly, moon-radiance that flooded the world, for he was getting always nearer to Bozzam City and Gloria. He saw where the mesa ended, where it narrowed, swooped downward, and merged with a high ridge below. He could trace the bold line of the ridge as it wound away into the distance.

Polestar was still running with undiminished speed, his great muscles working tirelessly, his spirit undimmed, his courage untouched. As though contemptuous of distance, of effort, he ran on over the mesa, took the descending slope to the broad back of the high ridge with light, mighty leaps, flattened out, a white streak racing ahead of a continuing dust-cloud.

CHAPTER XXIII

AS SMALL, slender man who was faded overalls and a flannel shirt that was much too large for him sat on the sofa in the hotel office staring at the elk-head above the mantel. He was smoking meditatively, though occasionally he turned his head and glanced at Gloria Stowe, who was standing behind the counter writing with a pencil which she wielded mechanically, as though her thoughts were far from the paper in front of her.

At last she seemed to finish, for she laid the pencil down, folded the paper, tucked it into a book on a shelf behind her, and gazed with big, reflective eyes at the little man.

The little man was the one who had seen Lannon whip Throne in Blanchard's general store.

"Corwin," she said, "I reckon I'll close up. It's getting late, and I ain't looking for anybody to get in hyeh on Number Ten."

"Time's certainly runnin' along," returned the little man. "Time's sure got that habit." He grinned engagingly at Gloria, but made no effort to leave. Instead, he seemed to settle himself more comfortably on the sofa.

"Your dad's gone away, eh?" he asked seemingly unaware of Gloria's narrowing eyes.

"He's gone to Lankar. He got word that a man over there wanted to see him on important business. He left on Number Six."

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"There," He Said Vibrantly,
"I've Done What I Wanted to
Do Since the First Time I Saw
You. Some Day I'll Be Doing
It Again. I'm Going to Make You Love Me!"

when he had discovered what had seemed to be convincing evidence that Clearwater had misled him in order to permit Campan's men to revenge themselves upon him by slaughtering his cattle at Bear Flat. His faith in Clearwater had been destroyed, and had he not answered the impulse to go to the Star there was no doubt that Clearwater would have died, convicted of collusion with the rustlers. Bannack would have killed him. Lannon would have be-

A MAN AND A GIRL EACH ACTED LIKE A

Blind Fool

by IRIS M. JEPSON



URGIE gazed across the scantily set table, attempting to look pleased at Gregg's announcement. He had a job!

But she wasn't pleased! She'd rather see Gregory out of work six more months, than have this happen. A position on Kennedy's yacht . . .

"Of course, it isn't permanent," he was saying. "They'll just want me for this cruise. But even temporary work is better than nothing!"

Curgie nodded, politely, but her mind was not dwelling on Gregg's words. It was dwelling on that other trip—two years ago, when Curgie had been employed on the same yacht. She hadn't known him then. He hadn't come to live above her in the little one-room apartment, at that time, but she knew what the trip had done to him. Gregg had told her all about that cruise with Jim Kennedy, and old man Kennedy, and the lovely, languorous Myrta Kennedy, whom he'd worshiped from a distance, ever since.

"I guess you proved to them that you were a darn good engineer," Curgie said lightly. "Well, I'll miss you, Gregg. Won't be the same, not hearing you upstairs whistling, or barging down for a cup of tea."

Gregory set his cup down with an abruptness that startled her. "Oh, I forgot," he exploded. "I think I can hear you in on this too."

"Why—how . . ."

"Myrta is taking several friends along, and she wants a beauty operator to go with them. She was interviewing one, while I was there, but the girl didn't fill the bill. I just mentioned that I had a friend, who was a beauty operator . . ."

"Gregg, you did?"

"And she wants you to come and see her. She's quite enthused. Says she'll pay you \$100 and expenses . . ."

A hundred dollars, and a cruise to California! Why, after being out of work almost as long as Gregg, it sounded too good to be true. And, if she could go, she wouldn't mind so much about Gregg going . . .

Yet, long after Gregg had retired to his own apartment, Curgie sat with her hands tightly clasped under the table, thinking. Gregg had almost forgotten to tell her that she might be included in the trip, it was so unimportant to him! Nothing was important to him, but Myrta!

Her mind reviewed their friendship of the last year, in an effort to disprove that. But she couldn't. Gregg's attitude toward her was, definitely, brotherly. He'd never guessed her secret adoration for him. If he had, he wouldn't have taken her into his confidence so completely.

He'd often told her of that first trip, when he'd been employed by the Kennedys on a cruise to Hawaii; often confided his deep, hopeless love for Myrta,

to her. And though she'd been outwardly sympathetic, Curgie had rebelled inwardly against the spell that Myrta had cast over him.

She'd hoped that, in time, Gregory would forget Myrta. But he hadn't forgotten—and now, he'd be with her on another trip, and all her own work to erase the image of Myrta from his mind, would be lost.

At length Curgie rose and crept to the mirror in her tiny dressing room. For a long time she stood before it, blinking at the watery young reflection that looked back at her.

"Oh, God," she whispered, "let me go on this trip. If Gregory goes, let me go, too . . ."

AS THE yacht sailed out of harbor, Curgie stood by the deck rail and watched the tall buildings of New York receding. For a moment a thrill of sheer ecstasy gripped her.

"This is better than being couped up in a beauty parlor and riding back and forth on the subway," she decided, happily. "I'll be close to Gregg too."

But now that thought seemed



"All Set for the Trip, Curgie?"
He Grinned

to cast a shadow over the bright waters and fill Curgie's heart with doubt. Be near Gregg? But so would Myrta be near him; and now that she had seen her rival, Curgie felt, more acutely than ever, the utter impossibility of making Gregg forget her.

A striking girl: aloof, sleepy-eyed—

that was Myrta! A girl with hair like thick, golden honey, and eyes as cold and blue as the waters of a frozen lake. Curgie thought of her interview with Myrta prior to their sailing and a little flame of resentment swept her.

"You'll do!" Myrta had told her, crisply. "Your references seem to be all right. However . . ."

Curgie had risen to go; joy in her heart at the outcome of this meeting, but something in Myrta's voice stopped her.

"I think it's well for us to understand each other at the start," Myrta had stated, pointedly. "They'll be a number of us on board. My mother is taking two of his college friends and I am taking three of my own friends. You realize what your position will be?"

"Why—I think so," Curgie had replied, blushing.

"It will be that of any other paid employee on board! Don't forget that, Miss Ward. We try to keep our help satisfied—no part of the boat will be denied you—only we really can't allow our employees to mingle with us socially."

Now that she had met the other young people on board, Curgie understood Myrta's warning more clearly. She understood that they would tolerate no friendliness from a—a beauty operator. They were all sons and daughters of the rich.

The first day there was little call for her services. Curgie spent it in unpacking her things and arranging her small cabin. Then she gave herself up to getting acquainted with the boat and selecting a spot on deck (removed from the deck chairs of the others) where she might sit and read; or just sit and watch the sparkling, churning water.

It was late in the afternoon before Gregory sought her out. "Well," he grinned, coming upon her unexpectedly. "All set for the trip, Curgie?"

Curgie smiled up at him delightedly. "All set, Gregg! And you?"

He nodded. "Guess I'll be pretty busy during the days, Curgie. You will, too, won't you? We won't get to see each other much."

Curgie's clear eyes darkened. "But—the evenings, Gregg?"

He hesitated and a frown wrinkled his dark brow. Curgie always loved him when he frowned. It made him so much more human—so understandable. "That's what I wanted to see you about. It looks like I'm going to be dragged in on their dances and things . . ."

"But Gregg!" Curgie was unaware of the protest in her voice. "Myrta told me that the employees were not to mingle with the guests."

"She did, eh?" His brow deepened. "She means you. . . . Well, Curgie, the heck of it is, they don't regard me as a regular employee. They regard me as an officer."

Curgie felt a stab of keen disappointment. So Gregg was to be regarded as one of them—and she was not? But she tried to smile, casually. "Oh, well, it doesn't matter much. You'll have a chance now to meet Myrta on her own grounds, won't you?"

He nodded. He couldn't understand, of course, the effort those words had cost her. But suddenly he looked down at her, ruefully. "Yes," he agreed. "I wanted a chance to see Myrta again, didn't I? But look, Curgie, I wouldn't want us to forego all our time together. It's such fun, talking things over with you. I'll try to arrange it so that we can meet here for a little while each day."

When he had gone, Curgie stared over the darkening water, gloomily. Half the pleasure was gone from the trip, now that she knew she would not see much of Gregg. All the pleasure was gone from it. Every minute Gregg was off duty, she'd know he was with Myrta. What sense had there been to her coming, after all?

THE next days were busy ones for Curgie. The mornings were given to marceling pretty heads or resetting waves that had become disarranged by the salty sea breeze. Sometimes she worked in the afternoons, giving elaborate facials and polishing already gleaming nails.

"There's only four women on board, but they keep me as busy as 14 would at home," she thought disgustedly. Maybe Curgie had so little patience with the beauty aides she administered because she, herself, did not need them. Her thick brown curls had never known the touch of a curling iron. "And a lot of good it would do, if they had," she thought, disdainfully. They were always ruffled; always outrageously disordered for all her efforts to keep them neatly trim.

In spite of her disappointment at being denied Gregg's company, she found it fun to sit in the evenings, wrapped in her steamer rug, and watch—from a distance—the activities of the guests. They played bridge or danced under the light of the chill, glittering stars. Curgie grew accustomed to seeing Gregg with them, but she never grew accustomed to the ache in her heart when he first joined them. . . .

She began to acquaint herself with the characteristics of the others. Mr. Kennedy, a gruff, portly old man, kept a close watch on his children. He, too, had brought a friend along for company; a Mr. Adams, elderly executive of the Brock Steamship Company.

Curgie gathered other things from these nightly vigils. She learned that Jim's college friends, Howard and Lester, were both incorrigible flirts. She thought that Myrta liked Howard a little better than the rest, but she wasn't quite sure of it. Besides, Mr. Kennedy

seemed to have a grudge against him.

One evening, quite accidentally, Curgie overheard a conversation between Myrta and her father before the others had come on deck.

"It's got to stop!" Kennedy said fiercely, pausing in his restless pacing back and forth. "You knew what I thought of that young good-for-nothing, long ago."

"Dad, you know there's nothing between Howard and me," Myrta's voice was a lazy, indifferent drawl. "You've worked yourself into a frenzy over nothing."

"You told me that there was nothing between you two before we started—or I'd never have let him come," Kennedy thundered.

"Well, it was true. What if I do flirt with him, a little? It's only to pass the time. Why, I think twice as much of that young engineer. If you're going to worry about some one, worry about him."

Curgie's heart contracted, but she heard old man Kennedy say, slowly: "I'd like to believe that. I'd feel a lot better about this trip. Now there's a lad who's



Howard Embraced Myrta With His Arm

worth while—and he seems to like you, too. I think a good deal of Gregory!"

"So do I!" Myrta laughed, gaily. "I'm not serious about Howard, but I do think I might be—about Gregory. I didn't tell you, but when we dock at Port Pardee tomorrow, Gregg and I are going to do the town."

So Myrta was beginning to reciprocate Gregg's feelings, and Mr. Kennedy was satisfied to have it so? That meant only one thing! Her own hopes of ever winning Gregg were blasted.

Curgie didn't stay on deck that night, not even on the chance of seeing Gregg alone a few minutes. She slipped down to her cabin to be alone with her wretched, tormented thoughts. And for several hours she sat with clenched hands, gazing out the open porthole, numbly. Gregg and Myrta—Myrta and Gregg! The words beat a weird tattoo in her brain all night.

And in the morning, it was as Myrta had said. When they put in at Port, she

and Gregg went away together, leaving Curgie alone and forlorn. She'd thought—hoped that she and Gregg would spend their time on shore together, at least.

"Not going ashore?" Mr. Adams asked her kindly, coming up on her at the deck rail after the others had left. For some reason, Mr. Adams was friendly toward her. He did not ignore her as the others did.

Curgie shook her head. "Nothing to go ashore for," she replied, dully.

"Well, why not come in town and have lunch with me? Mr. Kennedy is going to be busy for awhile, and I'm not anxious to go alone."

Curgie accepted, gratefully. Mr. Adams' insistence on treating her as a friend, while the others looked upon her as a servant, warmed her heart. Also, with him, the day did not look so drab and empty.

They lunched together at a hotel, then strolled about the streets, talking like old friends. Mr. Adams couldn't have treated her more chivalrously, if he'd been a young man—in love with her. He even bought her a box of candy and a basket of fruit before he took her back to the boat.

"I like the companionship of young people," he smiled, when she tried to thank him. "That is, young people like you. The others—the ones on this boat—are too wrapped up in themselves to take time for an old man."

"Maybe they think you wouldn't enjoy them," Curgie countered.

"Well, that's right! I wouldn't! I wouldn't give two pins for the whole lot hoodlums on board. You're different though. You and that young Gregory Ellis."

Curgie was pleased. Mr. Adams' remarks were like balm to her wounded pride. And—he'd included Gregg in those remarks. Nice to have an important man like Mr. Adams interested in you!

An hour later, Curgie saw Myrta and Gregg come aboard. Myrta was clinging to Gregg's arm, laughing, but something about Gregg's expression, puzzled her. He certainly didn't appear as gay and happy as when they'd started. There was a—was a weary expression in his eyes and his mouth was grim.

"Did you enjoy your shore leave?" Curgie asked when he met her on deck that evening.

"Oh, very much!" His voice was heavy. "Sort of glad to put out to sea again, though."

Something was wrong. What was it? Maybe Myrta hadn't been as kind as Gregg had hoped, but Curgie scorned to ask.

During the next days, however, she watched the progress of Gregg's affair with Myrta closely. They put into port exactly three times, and each time Myrta and Gregory went ashore, laugh-

ing and in high spirits at the outset—but formal and strained when they returned.

"Myrta's making him unhappy," Curgie thought angrily, hating Myrta for her capriciousness. But after those shore excursions, Gregory often rebuked his attentions—only spent more and more of his time, off duty, with Myrta.

And he did not meet Curgie on deck as often. Apparently, he was so involved in his own affairs that he'd forgotten all about her.

"I guess it's the end, all right," Curgie told herself one evening, bitterly. From her isolated spot, she watched Gregg and Myrta stroll to the deck rail; saw Gregory suddenly lift Myrta's hand to his lips and kiss it passionately. Curgie hadn't anticipated the effect of such a scene on herself. For a moment, she felt as though she had been struck, brutally!

A voice, close to her, broke over her dismal thoughts. "I say! Why is it you hide out on us, this way?"

Curgie raised her stricken eyes, and perceived Lester Whitaker.

"Oh," she shrugged, seeking to regain her calm. "I'm only an employee. I'm not supposed to mingle with the guests."

Lester's eyes were appraising "Darned shame!" he muttered at last. "I'd say you'd put a little pep in the crowd. Did Myrta tell you that?"

"That I shouldn't—?" Well, of course, she implied it. She—

His laugh wasn't particularly pleasant. "No wonder! I've been watching you, and I think I've got Myrta's angle all right. You're too darn pretty for her comfort. She's afraid—"

Curgie snorted. "Oh, stupid! That's not her reason. She's pretty enough herself not to have to worry about any one else."

"Oh, yeah? Nobody thinks so but that sap engineer. She's stereotyped. Has the kind of prettiness that tires you."

Curgie let the remark about Gregg pass.

"I'll tell you what," Lester said, suddenly. "I don't intend to let Myrta get away with this. I'm going to see you, anyway."

Curgie elevated her brows. "On what excuse, please? After all, I have to do as she says."

"My nails are in horribly bad shape," he replied, slyly. "Can you arrange, Miss Ward, to give me a manicure every afternoon, at three?"

Curgie had to laugh. After all, it did comfort her, having some one think her company desirable.

She began both to like Lester and dislike him. He came, as arranged, every afternoon to have her manicure his nails, and he alternately made love to her and teased her. She didn't mind the teasing—it was fun; but his love-making was annoying.

Curgie wondered if she could have liked Lester if it hadn't been for Gregory. In a way, she almost wished that she could. "I'm a fool, mooning around about Gregg this way," she thought, impatiently. "He was Myrta's before we ever came on this trip—and he belongs to her for good, now."

There came a night when she was sitting, as usual, removed from the crowd on deck. They had started a card game, only Lester did not join them. Curgie

saw him excuse himself and pace the deck restlessly for a time. Then, with a movement of determination, he flung his cigarette overboard and strode out to her.

"Look, Curgie," he said in a low tone. "I'm fed up with this stupid bunch. What do you say we go down to my cabin and—"

—and talk?" Curgie eyed him, suspiciously. She strongly suspected him of having drunk too many high balls. "But we can talk here."

"Not the things I want to talk about. Too many listening ears."

"Oh—them!" Curgie sniffed. "They've the phonograph going, and they're interested in their cards. They aren't going to bother."

Suddenly he pulled her to her feet. "All right, then I'll tell you here, before the Lord and everybody! Curgie, I—"

"Oh don't be such an idiot, Lester," Curgie managed to laugh, struggling free of his grasp. "What's wrong with you, anyway? Moonlight madness?"

But Lester was not to be put aside so easily. With a quick move, he again caught her to him. "Sweet, we dock at Warner Bay tomorrow and we'll be there three whole days. Let's you and I—"

Again Curgie tried to struggle free and tear took possession of her. She saw that Lester was in earnest and something in his feverish clasp and quickened breath struck terror in her heart.

"I'll thank you to take your hands off that lady."

A deep, familiar voice broke over them. Curgie wheeled and, as Lester loosened his grasp, she ran to Gregory's side. "Gregg!" she breathed. Then she laughed, shakily. "You better take your boy friend away. He's getting out of bounds."

"Come on, Lester," Gregg's voice was both friendly and resolute. "Aren't you being something of an ass?"

To Curgie's dismay, Lester showed no signs of making light of the incident. He glowered at Gregory, threateningly. "What's the idea? If I want to talk to Miss Ward—"

"Well, you can't talk to her that way! She happens to be a friend of mine and I'm going to see that no one annoys her."

"Betwixting all the gals on this trip, eh?" Lester sneered. "Well, you can go paddle your canoe with Myrta—this is my business."

"Leave Myrta out of it!" Gregory's temper was rising and Curgie was really frightened.

To avoid being overheard, Lester spoke in a low tone. "Think I'm not on to you and Myrta, eh? Well, I am, see? I know you've been spending your time on shore together—and I know what you plan to do when we dock tomorrow. If you don't want me to tell her, rather, you better get back to the engine room and shut up! You're only an employee on this boat, anyway."

"Gregg!" Curgie saw his face whiten. She didn't intend to ask, but the question leapt to her lips. "What are you going to do in Warner Bay?"

He didn't answer. Lester, prompted by his silence, continued maliciously: "Myrta's father thinks she has a girl friend there and that she's going to visit her the three days we're in port, eh? Maybe he'd like to know where you two

are really going to spend that time—"

Perhaps Lester saw that whether or not Gregg was an employee made no difference. He had gone too far. With an unsimulating, backward laugh, he swung on his heel and left them.

Gregory turned to Curgie, his face crimson. "Look here, Curgie. I—well, I—"

Curgie waited for him to say more, but it did not come. He couldn't explain then! The following silence was more significant than all Lester's veiled accusations. Anger and hurt pride swept her.

"Why did you interfere with Lester and I?" she demanded sharply. Did he think he could do this to her and still deny her all companionship?

"Why, I thought you wanted me to. You said—"

"Never mind what I said. I didn't want you to." Tears were welling in her eyes, but Gregory mustn't see. "I—I like Lester," she blurted.

She didn't! At that moment, she'd gladly have relegated him to the ends of the earth, only she must have some weapon.

"I'm sorry," Gregg said, quickly. "Believe me, Curgie, I—I won't butt in again." He bowed stiffly and vanished in the night.

THE next morning, Curgie answered summons to Myrta's cabin. Her heavy, sleepless eyes took in the disarray of frocks, the half-packed suit case, and Myrta's apparent nervousness.

"Fix my hair, will you?" Myrta demanded, petulantly. "And I want a facial too. Think you can do it before we dock?"

Curgie set about her work at once. For a time Myrta watched her in silence, but at last she burst out: "You're a good kid, Curgie! I'm going to tell you a secret."

Curgie bowed her head. She thought she knew what was coming, even before Myrta told her. "I'm eloping today. Dad would have a fit if he found out. That's why I must be so careful. As soon as we dock—"

In her excitement, Myrta had forgotten the difference in their stations. She chattered on but Curgie did not hear her. This was what Lester had referred to last night. If he wanted to, Lester could tell Mr. Kennedy in time to stop this crazy thing.

But Lester wouldn't! Curgie didn't know why she was sure of that. Should she go to Mr. Kennedy now—before it was too late?

And suddenly, just as she knew that Lester would not tell, Curgie knew that she would not, either. Preventing Gregory's elopement with Myrta would not give him to her. It would only stop them, temporarily.

She lifted a strand of Myrta's shining hair, and applied the hot iron to it, her thoughts milling, hopelessly. Her purpose for coming on the trip was gone. She'd hoped to vanquish Myrta's image from Gregg's heart, once and for all, and it had been a futile hope. "What now? Take a train back to New York? Yes, that was it. That was all there was left for her to do."

On her way to her own cabin, Curgie

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BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



THE BUNGLE FAMILY

By H. J. Tuthill



FRENCH FRIEDS FOR SUPPER

Continued from Page 1

flickering flame of the oil lamp. She had always been proud of her ability to clean the apartment thoroughly in 30 minutes.

It was midnight, and when Chet came in—showing by his relieved expression that the cow had been saved—she met him at the door, face haggard and every muscle quivering.

"Sorry I dummed out on you," he apologized. "Why didn't you wait until morning to can the meat?"

"There'll be plenty to do then, without any extras," she contended grimly. She faltered a moment, feeling for words. "Chet, even if that loan does go through, I won't promise to stay out here another year. It's just too much, the way things are! I could be making more than this farm will produce, and be living comfortably. I know we couldn't save much in the city; but here it all goes to pay on the farm. It will be years before that loan is canceled!"

"I'd hoped we could remodel this house, and have things a little nicer at the end of this year," Chet protested, almost desperately. "I hadn't counted on two-cost hogs."

She softened a little at that. "It would be lovely. But Chet, surely you can find some sort of work in the city now. I know I could get my old job back. If the loan is extended, we can rent out the place, and the rental ought to meet the interest and taxes."

"Even if it did, that wouldn't pay off any of the principal," he pointed out. "I might stay and run things—batch, I mean—and let you go back to your job. If it would make you happier."

"The look in his eyes stabbed through her."

"No, no! We wouldn't want that. Neither of us would!"

He seemed to consider. Meanwhile her eyes roamed over the bleak wallpaper, and the chipped paint of the shabby rooms. The dainty etchings, and the pieces of tapestry she had brought from the mockery, seemed to stand out in shrill mockery against the drab walls. The rugs and curtains had gone with the apartment. Here was cracked and battered linoleum; frayed and yellowed lengths of old net sagged at the windows.

"Maybe you're right," Chet said presently. "You don't like it out here. I can scare up some sort of a job if I'm not too particular. But I've come to be sorta fond of the old place again. If dad and I'd been able to get along, I don't know as I would ever have left."

Nancy almost regretted having made him promise. Maybe the loan wouldn't go through after all. It might be the easiest way out. But it gave her a feeling of playing traitor to even harbor such a thought.

The committee arrived at ten in the morning, four fat, cigar-puffing men, and one straight, hawk-beaked female in blue serge. Nancy went out to the sedan, and knew that she disliked the woman at sight.

Miss Knowles gave one glance about the buildings, made a perfunctory survey of the lovely, budding trees, the new orchard, the lush pasture and broad hay-fields, the black, rich mold of the fresh-

tured garden earth. Then she seemed to wash her hands of that part of the proceedings, and leaving the men to cross-examine Chet, she followed Nancy into the house.

"Pleasant place you have here, Mrs. Winslow," she stated, with as little warmth as though she had been counting eggs. It dawned on Nancy that it might be very easy to turn this woman against renewing the loan. If she reported dissatisfaction with the running of the house to the remainder of the committee. . . .

"Have you always lived on the farm, Mrs. Winslow?"

"Only this year," Nancy replied.

"I suppose you are quite enthusiastic about it?"

The question was impersonal as the expression on the woman's face. Nancy knew, however, that here was her chance to make or break Chet's chances of having the loan renewed.

"I'm very fond of farm life," she assured Miss Knowles.

Nancy had a way of handling people. One does, when one has been private secretary to the president of an important firm. She had convinced Miss Knowles—by the time the men had returned and dinner was on the table—that she not only was fond of her present mode of living, but that she was very competent in coping with the many problems it presented. Skillfully, and without any gush, or any playing up to her subject, she casually outlined her success with poultry, the way she made butter and peddled it in town, and the manner in which, with her own hands, she had altered her city wardrobe to meet the exigencies of farm life.

Miss Knowles bent so far as to help with the dinner. Once she even smiled—a bit fustianously it was true—when Nancy explained without apology, that the rusty heater in the living room had been salvaged from a junk pile, because the money for a new one had gone to buy an extra milk cow.

From the way the four fat men stuffed, the dinner was a success. And when they were ranged in a semi-circle about the rusty heater, resembling four bumptious muscovies on a crooked rail, as they puffed their cigars—with Miss Knowles straggled in as a lone call duck—Chet sat moodily and awaited the verdict. Nancy wanted to cry.

The muscovies spoke their pieces in turn. The first favored extending the loan. The second wanted a conference before he revealed the state of his mind. So Chet and Nancy went out—in the kitchen to tackle the stack of dirty dishes, while the ducks huddled in the middle of the pond and gabbled the matter out.

In time the chairman came to the door. "There was some lack of satisfaction with the condition of the fences and the fact that the buildings need paint," he squeaked, as though delivering a set speech. "Miss Knowles however, has presented an extremely glowing account of Mrs. Winslow's efficiency as a farm woman. In view of this, and considering that all interest payments have been met, we feel justified in extending the loan."

Nancy wanted to throw her arms around Miss Knowles and kiss her, then scratch her eyes out. Chet was beaming.

Nancy avoided meeting his eyes. The chairman had been chewing the stub end of his cigar. Now he removed it, and coughed slightly.

"It is customary," he announced, "for this committee to make a slight charge for its inspection service. In this case it will be \$50. Ahem . . . ah . . . you understand, of course, that the amount is to be paid before the papers are signed."

"But Mr. Talbot," Chet stammered, "I hadn't understood—I'll pay it, of course, but I'm afraid I'll have to ask for a little time. Frankly—I haven't the money."

Mr. Talbot coughed again and spluttered. Nancy, her eyes fastened on a grease spot in the wallpaper over Miss Knowles' head, sensed refusal. She laid her hand on her husband's arm.

"I think I have that much left in the bank," she stated quietly. "I'll write a check."

"But darling," Chet's voice was low and frantic. "That money is yours—your own. We agreed that you were to keep it in reserve—in case anything ever happened!"

As she left the room to get her check book, she was rewarded by seeing Miss Knowles smile, for the second time. As she wrote the check, she took stock of the fact that there were exactly \$10 left to her credit. Ten dollars. That would barely pay for a day coach ticket back to the city. She smiled oddly, as the idea struck her.

The chairman carefully placed the check in his billfold, and sat down to make out the extension papers, with their pages of interest coupons, to be clipped and sent with the semi-annual remittances.

"There is one other stipulation to this agreement," he mentioned with an oily inflection. "We ask you to sign an agreement to live on the property, during the first two years for which the mortgage runs. We have adopted that policy as a safeguard."

Involuntarily, Nancy's hand came up to stifle the exclamation on her lips. She leaned back against the book shelves along the wall.

"I'm afraid Mrs. Winslow may not be willing to sign that agreement," she heard Chet trying to explain.

For a moment her knees felt a little wobbly. She looked at the rusty heater, the cracked linoleum, the faded curtains, and the etchings from the apartment that seemed to stare out from the dingy wall sardonically. She felt the stare of the entire committee focused on her face. Her eyes met Chet's, trying bravely not to plead with her. In spite of him, his gaze seemed to cling to her, tearing at her heart.

She changed the expression of her mouth, and knew that the simulated smile was a mockery. Straightening away from the bookcase, she heard her voice, as though coming from some source outside herself:

"I'm quite willing to sign such an agreement. Of course Mr. Winslow and I intend to remain on the farm. It's the sort of life we love."

Poems New and Old Favorites

TO AUTUMN

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-
eaves run.
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core,
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees.
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'erblown their clammy cells.

Who has't not seen them set and said thy store?
Something whoever looks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind,
Or on a self-repos'd furrow sound asleep,
Squares the next swath and all its twisted corners,
And sometimes like a plowman bent deep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oarman, hours by hours,

Where are the songs of spring? Ah, where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hues.
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river swallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or lies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly
bourn.

Beech-crickets sing, and now with treble soft
The red breast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.
—JOHN KEATS.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

"**THE** precious pearl of price,
I sought to make my own;
Far and wide I searched,
But came back tired and lone.

In books I looked in vain,
Required of learned men,
And when morning dawned,
My quest began again.

Hopeskin seemed the search,
At last in deep despair,
One way still left to me,
I turned to God in prayer.

"Go sell all that thou hast
And give unto the poor,
Then yours will be the pearl,
And happiness secure."

—GREENVILLE KILBURN.

THE UNWILLING GYPSY

"**THE** wide, green earth is mine in which to wander,
Each path that beckons I may follow free,
Sea to gray sea

BUT O, that one walled garden, small and sheltered,
Belonged to me!

High on the mountain top I watch the sunset,
The splendid fires flare upward and burn low,
Ah, once to know
Down in the twilight lowlands, dim and tender,
My own hearth-glow!

Nights fall. A thousand stars look down upon me,
But though from inland plain to ocean's foam
My steps may roam,
One clear fixed star forever is denied me—
The light of home!

—JOSEPHINE JOHNSON.

YOUNG HEARTS AND OLD

WHEN the frost has nipped the clover,
And the maple sheds its leaves,
When no more you hear the buzzin'
Round the hives among the bees;
When the crows come from pasture,
And stand hunched up 'neath the shed,
When the chickens follow round as they
They wanted to be led:

It is then that thought of winter
Sets your young heart in a glow,
As you think of coming parties
And your sleigh-ride through the snow.

When the old Thanksgiving gobbler
Has been roasted, carved and eat,
At the family reunion

Where you all together meet:
And the morn'-gins and the doughnuts,
That your mother always made,
Just lays out all the city cooks
And drops them in the shade;
Full to the brim you young folks then
Arrange where you will go,
On Christmas with your best girl, for
A sleigh-ride through the snow.

On the dawn of Christmas morning.

How nice you brush the pale
That carried off first premium
At your last county fair.

When you hitch them to your cutter
And they step out high and fine,
And you've started off and got the girl
That's always in your mind,
It's then your heart beats warmly
And your face lights with a glow,
As you scuddle up together for
Your sleigh-ride in the snow.

But when you're dived with that same girl
Some 42 years, or so,

And hear on Christmas voices calling,
"Grandma!" from the door,
And as you watch the smiling face,
That's cheered you on for years,
Through all the changing scenes of life,
"Mild sorrows, joys and fears,
It's then you realize that love,
Through all the years can grow
Until you worship that same girl
You drove with through the snow.

—E. W. PIERCE.

FAILURES

"**THEY** bear no laurels on their sunless brows,
Nor night within their pale hands as they go;
They look as men accustomed to the slow
And level onward course 'neath drooping boughs.
Who may these be so trumpet-dolted,
These of the dark processions of woe,
Unpraised, unblamed, but whom and Achæon's
flow

Monotonously lulls to leaden drowse?
These are the failures. Clutched by Circum-

stance,
They were—say not too weak—too ready prey
To their own fear whose fixed Gorgon glance
Made them as stone for aught of great essay;
Or else they needed when their Master-Chance
Wound his one signal, and went on his way.

—ASTOR UPSON.

SONG

WE only ask for sunshine,
We did not want the rain;
But see the flowers that spring from showers
All up and down the plain.

We beg the gods for laughter,
We shrink, we dread the tears;
But grief's redress is happiness,
Alternate through the years.

—HELEN HAY WHITNEY.

SAMELA

I LIKE to dance in her morning weed,
Girt with a crimson roller of brightest dye,
Goes fair Samela;
Whiter than be the flicks that straggling feed,
When washed by Arcturus' Frost they lie,
Is fair Samela.

As fair Aurora in her morning-gay,
Decked with the ruddy glister of her love,
Is fair Samela;
Like lovely Thetis on a calmed day,
When as her brightness Neptune's fancy moves,
Shines fair Samela.

Her tresses gold, her eyes like glossy streams,
Her teeth are pearl, the breasts are ivory
Of fair Samela.

Her cheeks like rose and her yield forth gleams;
Her brows bright arches framed of ebony.

Thus fair Samela
Passeth fair Venus in her heaven's hue,
And June on the shores of majesty.

For 'tis Samela;
Pallas, in wit—all three, if you will view,
For beauty, wit and matchless dignity
Yield to Samela.

—ROBERT GREENE.

A PRAYER.

O MASTER, let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service true;
Tell me Thy secret; Help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear, winning word of love;
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
And guide them in the homeward way.

Teach me Thy patience; still with Thee
In closer, dearer company.
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
In trust that triumphs over wrong.

In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broadening way;
In peace that only Thou canst give,
With Thee, O Master, let me live.

THE ROVER

"**THE** wanderlust is on me,
It sets my blood on fire,
I yearn to board the vessel,
That sails for heart's desire.

A ship is in the offing,
That's bound for the open sea,
I love the bounding billows,
And there I'd like to be.

I'm in a mood that's reckless,
My heart is far away,
My thoughts are in the Orient,
I'm longing for Cathay.

—HARRY BARKLEY.

HE MADE THE NIGHT

VAST Chaos, of old, was God's dominion!
Tear His beloved child, His own first-born;
And He was aged ere the thought of moon
Shook the amber steps of dim oblivion.
Then all the works of darkness being done,
Through countless aeons hopelessly forlorn,
Out to the very utmost verge and bound,
God at His last, reluctant, made the sun.

He loved His darkness still, for it was old;
He grieved to see His eldest child take flight;
And when His Fiat Laid the death-smell tight,
As the doomed darkness backward by Him rolled,
He snatched a remnant flying into light
And strewed it with the stars, and called it night.

—LORD DUNN.

and smiled at Curgie, ruefully. "Don't you worry," he whispered. "I'll get you to the train. Sorry you were dragged in on this."

Curgie nodded, dumbly. Sorry! Dragged in on the horrible scene that would stop Myrta's marriage to Gregory. She'd have to face Gregg again—and at such a time!

Instead of abating, Kennedy's wrath seemed to mount. In her heart, Curgie prayed wildly that they'd be in time; then hoped, with a feeling of weariness and futility, that they wouldn't. Gregg's happiness was all that mattered.

But she couldn't endure this continual stream of abuse, directed toward Gregory. After all, no matter what he had done, he wasn't the things that Kennedy called him.

"Stop!" she cried, hysterically, after a particularly venomous outburst. "It isn't true! Gregg's not a cad. You ought to be glad Myrta is getting such a fine—such a splendid . . ." Her voice broke.

Just what Kennedy would have answered, Curgie never knew. The taxi shrieked to a halt before a mountain hotel and he sprang from the car.

Curgie and Mr. Adams sat motionless while he ran up the steps. But Adams' piercing eyes were on her and Curgie felt, rather than saw, the slow twinkle of amusement that lighted them.

"I think I understand, now," he said kindly. "Well, that puts a different light on the whole thing . . ."

Curgie wasn't listening. She saw Myrta come out on the porch, laughing. "You're too late, dad!" Her gay voice floated down to them. "I told you we were to be married here, purposefully. But we weren't! We were married in town—and came here for our honeymoon!"

Curgie swallowed hard. She thought she could sympathize with old man Kennedy's dismay, now. Then, out of the door came—Howard! He encircled Myrta with his arm, offering Mr. Kennedy his free hand.

Curgie could not believe her eyes. She sat forward on the edge of her seat gasping. Kennedy hesitated for a moment, then took the proffered hand with a gesture of defeat.

It was enough! Scarcely knowing what she did, Curgie put her head against the sympathetic shoulder next to her and sobbed; hard, dry sobs of gratitude and relief.

Mr. Adams patted her bright little head, comfortingly. "There, there! I reckon you'll be going back to the boat now?"

In the excitement of the last few minutes, Curgie had forgotten her own plans. Now she sat up and dabbed at her eyes, embarrassedly.

"No, I think not. I'll be going on that train."

He started to expostulate, but Curgie held up an imploring hand. Mr. Adams couldn't understand. Gregg hadn't married Myrta, but this would not alter his love for her. It would only wreck his dreams: make him bitter and disillusioned. She couldn't stay on—seeing his unhappiness.

In a little while Mr. Kennedy came to the cab and told them that he was going to stay with the newweds for a time. In stoical submission to her re-

quest, Mr. Adams took Curgie to the train.

"I think you're making a mistake," he told her in leaving. "I'm pretty sure I know the lay of the land, now. You're leaving on account of that young engineer, aren't you?"

"It's the only thing to do."

"Well, maybe. But I'd say the young man will need you more than ever now. I don't want to see him run amuck over this thing. He's going to work for me when the trip is over."

"You've offered him a job with your company?"

"That's right. He's a fine young fellow. You don't meet his sort every day."

No, of course not. Curgie thought of that as she sank listlessly into a seat. A fine young man. Not the sort you meet every day.

The train commenced to move and she leaned back, closing her eyes. Well, it was over—her glorious trip that hadn't been glorious at all.

"Asleep, Curgie?"

At the sound of that voice, Curgie's eyes flew open. Startled, they rested on Gregg, sitting in the seat facing her and staring at her anxiously. Her first thought was that she must be the victim of a hallucination. But the vision was too real!

"Gregg!" she cried, then remembering her sore heart, she asked stiffly: "How did you know I was on this train?"

"I found the note you left for Kennedy just before I left. You see, I was coming away."

At the suspicion in her eyes, he took her hands and held them tightly. "Curgie, I know what you're thinking. I've got a lot of things to explain to you—if you'll let me."

As she did not reply, he continued, haltingly. "First—about Myrta. I did think I loved her, but it was all a hang-over from that first trip when I—I fell in love with an ideal—a symbol of something that didn't exist."

"You didn't find that out until after your 'ideal' eloped with another man," Curgie replied coolly.

"Oh yes I did! I had an inkling the first time we docked. Myrta and I went ashore together. Curgie, but we didn't spend our time together. Myrta slipped away from me to meet Howard. It didn't take me long to find out she was using me as a blind—to help her affair with Howard."

Resentment flared through Curgie—resentment that any one could treat Gregg so.

"But I went on, hoping Myrta was the—person I'd imagined, and being a blind fool! I didn't realize where my heart really was, until that night I saw Lester making love to you. Then I knew, but you said you cared for Lester . . ."

Curgie felt her defenses crumple, but she made one last effort to maintain them.

"I didn't stop you from trying to marry Myrta," she said, sharply. "What happened? Did she give you the slip on that too?"

He bowed his head. "No, I didn't even know she was planning anything, until Lester referred to it that night. Then I understood. I knew she must be planning to elope with Howard—but I couldn't very well tell that, could I? Especially as I wasn't sure. The only thing I could do was pack up and leave—since you intimated you cared for Lester."

Curgie's eyes softened, and something Gregory thought he saw in them prompted him to transfer his seat to the one next to her.

"Curgie," he whispered. "I hardly dared think until you left that way . . ."

"That I love you?" Very naively, she lifted her shining eyes to his. "But I do. I've loved you all along."

He groaned. "And me! I loved you, too—only I was too stupid to realize. I guess I had to see Myrta again to be convinced."

But Myrta no longer mattered. Oblivious to the passengers about them, Gregory bent his head and their lips met in a kiss that was to banish misunderstanding between them for all time.

FLAME OF THE BORDER

Continued from Page 6

pretty well satisfied with herself and the world at large.

It was in this mood that she came under the tall face of Lone Mesa.

She looked up at it, admiringly, as she always did. It was such a vast, majestic thing, its feet sloped out with the crumbling of the precipice, the wall itself flat as one's palm held perpendicularly. It always seemed sentient to her, a thing alive.

Perhaps it waited for the age-long disintegration which wind and sun and summer rains were slowly but surely bringing.

At any rate, the girl loved it. Now, as she swung around its southeastern side, she decided to go up. The trail, cut into the sheer face by those long dead inhabitants of the pueblo, went up from here, angling sharply, and so steep that none but the level-headed dared to make it.

She was such, and so was the good horse under her, though they had both

sweated in a cool day the first time they had attempted it. Now she leaned in her saddle with her hand on Darkness' neck, and they left the desert's floor, a creeping object hung on the rock face like a fly on a wall. The trail was narrow but wide enough, and she thought how easy it had been for those thoughtless warriors to keep their enemies from gaining the mesa's top, how many a luckless one had gone hurtling down the wall from stone or war-hatchet in those defenders' hands.

It was a stiff and slow climb, but presently they gained the top.

As they went forward Sonya felt the surge and thrill she always felt at sight of the vast reach of the world about her, spread out so far below. No wonder the ancient dwellers here had loved their habitat, had made it as near inaccessible as possible. She rode close to the southern rim.

There was the little curve to her mouth's corners, the soft crinkles about her dark eyes that always came with

"My brother."

"Well, it matters, and I've spent hours alone up here and other places wondering about it and why it does. I've known women all my life, in several countries, and never a one that stayed in my mind a week after I left her. I'm a bad lot, as I told you before, and it don't mean a great deal what I think, one way or another only I ain't ever felt so sorry in all my days over anything. It was just wondering, when you rode around th' wall yonder."

Sonya regarded him steadily.

"It does matter," she said, "what anyone thinks and does. No man lives to himself alone, as the Good Book says. To every man his place and a certain amount of influence. And to every man his responsibility, too, for that influence. You've got influence, somewhere, for something."

He stirred uneasily, moved on his booted feet, felt in his pocket for a fresh cigar.

"And something's changing in you," the girl went on, "there's been a change in you since—the first time I saw you. In your face, in your speech. You're using more g's on the end of your words, for one thing, and your eyes are different."

"If they weren't when I look at you, I'd be lower than I am, and that's plenty low."

"Granted again," said Sonya calmly and watched the slow tide of red that swept up over his pale cheeks. He dropped his glance and struck a match on his thigh, lighting the little brown cylinder he had rolled and twisted expertly.

"But the very fact of change outwardly argues change inwardly. I'd trust you now a considerable way."

His hand, halfway down from the cigar, stopped where it was and stayed there so long that the match burned to his calloused fingers and made itself felt before he flipped it away.

He drew a long breath of the fragrant smoke and, turning away, looked out over the spread of desert shimmering under the early afternoon sun.

When he turned back to her, Sonya was shocked at the look on his handsome face, a sunken look, haggard, as if some cruel vise of the spirit had suddenly been set upon it. He smiled, for the first time in her experience of him, and something leaped in Sonya's heart like a captive bird struggling to be free.

"Miss Savarin," he said, "that's the sweetest and the cruellest thing you ever said in your life. It's a dangerous thing, too—for me. Yet I'm glad you said it. It'll be something—something to remember among worse memories. And now I'll be getting along. Please come here whenever you want to. Lone Mesa is yours from now on."

He swung into his saddle, and the girl put out a quick hand and caught his sleeve.

"No," she said swiftly, "why should you give it up? There's something here for you, something good, I know. It's in your eyes when you look out yonder, a peace and a healing, and I want you to have that. You need it. It—it's something of the—of the soul, if you see what I mean."

Gravely he looked at her, shook his head wonderingly.

"My God!" he said softly. "What a woman you are! I didn't know there was one like you outside of th' story-books! Are you, by any chance, a lady preacher?"

"No," said Sonya, "of course not. I'm a physician. But I'm a woman first, and I can see when a heart's sick as well as a body. You're sick in your soul, your character, or I miss my guess—and I usually don't do that."

"No," he said, "you haven't now. But it don't matter in this case. It's too late for medicine—even yours."

"It's not," said Sonya, and was astonished at the passion of her tone: "it's never too late. Not till one's last heartbeat—only then."

"What are you tryin' to do?" he asked her gently, smiling into her eyes again—"change th' spots of th' leopard? Be careful. There's no more treacherous beast alive. Ain't I'm telling you true, Miss Savarin. I'm a leopard at heart, cruel and fierce, and not fit for you to speak to like this, straight out, man to man. I don't deserve it. If you knew what an' who I am you'd turn your horse an' ride for that down trail like all possessed, and you'd be right."

"Maybe I do know—a little," Sonya flashed, "but I'm not afraid. I'm never afraid, of anything."

"No. You're like a white angel in armor," he said gravely: "you haven't any need to fear. Even I could not hurt you when I wanted to. You're safe—anywhere—any time. Th' devil himself couldn't hurt you."

"You can," she said, "if you give up Lone Mesa and what it means to you. I'd feel a guilt if I drove you away from here."

"Then don't feel it. I'll come—sometimes. Only when I think you're not here."

"Good. And will you remember what I say—that it's never too late to change?"

"I'll remember," he said politely, "an' thanks. Now, goodbye, and good luck always, Miss Savarin."

"Goodbye," said Sonya, "and the same to you."

He carried his hat in his hand as he whirled the horse away around the corner of the ancient stone house, and did not look back, and Sonya listened to the shod hoofs striking into the defile that led down the face of the sheer cliff.

She sat stiffly quiet in her saddle and was conscious of a strange tumult within her spirit, astonishment and wonder and a slow anger at herself, and under all a deep and heavy sadness which was as new to her as the face of a stranger.

What had she done, talking here in this high solitude with this mysterious rider whose inner self was black with unnamed sins—whose very presence in the land was a menace and a portent of disaster?

For she knew past all doubting that this was the blue-eyed one of whom the Servant spoke in his vague parables, that henchman of Beelzebub who went before trouble. And she who owed him hatred, who had vowed to take her pound of flesh from him because of what he had tried to do that day at the mesa's run! She had talked with him, earnestly, and without scorn!

She sat so long lost in these troubling thoughts that Darkness fingered on restless feet, and the sun went majestically down the western heavens, and the soft blue veils of twilight were beginning to trail along the desert's face before she roused herself and went down the steep declivity for home.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK
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THE GOVERNESS

Continued from Page 4

He rose, brought out a board and men in a red box. She pulled the table before her.

"This is a lesson," she said. As they sat there the door opened and Mr. Coppard appeared. He had the air of a man doing a necessary but disliked duty.

"Good morning," he said. The boy's eyes clung to the pieces on the board.

"And how are the lessons progressing, Miss Wahlenberg? Is there anything in the way of books you would like?"

"As to that, I can't say yet, Mr. Coppard," Miss Wahlenberg answered. "I am teaching him chess just now."

"Chess? A reversal of the usual order, is it not?" he said dryly. "Well, I must get along to the office."

She nodded, and he went. The boy was pale. He put his hands to a knight, and his long fingers shook. They shook so obviously that in a gust of fury he swept the pieces off the board.

She leaned back in her chair. "But, Louis," she said, "do you give him any reason not to hate you? A man expects a good deal of his son, you know. He must be more handsome, stronger, more brilliant than his father. And you are his only son. But, if you can bear being his son, you are stronger than he."

"Some of us, Louis, never want for love, because we are born part of the pattern. If we're not born so, we have to accept that fact before we can make ourselves a part. We can't force our way in; we discipline ourselves in."

"Oh, don't preach at me!"
"Shall we go on with our game?" she said.

THAT night Mr. Coppard sent word for Miss Wahlenberg to come down to the library. She went quietly.

"You asked to speak with me, Miss Wahlenberg?"

"Yes."
"Wait! I understand you took Louis to the restaurant downstairs for luncheon. That kind of thing is distasteful to both Louis and myself."

"I know. But you will have to let me teach him in my own way."

"Does that have anything to do with teaching?"

"I think so."
"Miss Wahlenberg, I must say I do not think so. Furthermore, a person like my son is, I believe, repugnant—I can use no other term—to most people. It may seem heartless to you, but he is sometimes repugnant to me also, though of course I should never let him know that. So . . ." He looked up sharply to that faint smile of hers. "Well?" he said.

Over the boy's face came pallor.

"Perhaps you'd play a game of chess with your father while I play?" Miss Wahlberg said.

Mr. Coppard stood an instant and stared at the men, strewn out already on the table.

"Oh, yes," he said finally. "I was to teach you that game! So you have learned it without me!"

He sat down.

Music flowed in the room; wrapped the books, the globe, the chairs, the chess men, and the people around. Knights and bishops went their devious ways. Pawns did their unexpected small services. All to the rhythm in the room.

"Well, Louis! That was a capital move! I've no defense left! He's beaten me, Miss Wahlberg!"

"Good, Louis!" she said.

Mr. Coppard looked at his watch and rose quickly. "I'm late," he said. "I'll be up and have my revenge, Son, soon."

He did come again. Nearly every night chess men moved to music for a half-hour.

One night he said, "Let us all go down stairs for our dinner!"

They sat in the public place and talked as friends talk.

Later in the spring Mr. Coppard said to Louis, "Let us go to a play tonight, Son, just you and I!"

He did not apologize to Miss Wahlberg, but for the first time he looked at her fully, as if nothing alien separated them.

MISS WAHLBERG was in the library. It was autumn.

"Miss Wahlberg, I want to ask your advice."

"Yes!"

"About sending my boy to Sandley."

He gave her a quick look, and she said with scarcely a pause, "Yes he could go. It doesn't much matter, Mr. Coppard. He is able to go or to stay. He will like to have you want him to go."

He looked troubled. "That is why I should send him," he said. Then, "He would miss you very much. Miss Wahlberg, you have done a great deal for my boy. We have never been friends till now."

She smiled her faint smile, opened her bag, and drew out a slip of paper. "Oh, yes, you have been friends," she said. "This is a poem he wrote before ever I came to you."

It was the poem "In the Middle of the Night." Its whole theme was, without words that said just that, "In the middle of the night, I, a hunchback, wake and think of my father."

She stood, quiet, while he read it. He stood up, having finished, walked to a window.

"Miss Wahlberg, I can not say to you . . . you make it difficult . . . not doing, but saying things. It is not only my son to whom you . . ."

"Never mind, Mr. Coppard."

"I shall miss my son. I never thought I should. But he must learn to get on without me."

"He can get on without you."

He did not answer that, other than by a look of troubled questioning in his eyes. "But you, where will you go? Will you find it easy to find a place? Otherwise, I . . ."

"Do not trouble about me, Mr. Coppard."

He moved toward her and said: "Perhaps you do not realize it, Miss Wahlberg, but one finds it hard to talk to you in ordinary terms. I want to recompense you in some special way—some significant way."

"I have been fully recompensed, Mr. Coppard."

He looked down at the slip of paper, then up at her wordlessly. Tears stood in his eyes.

On the third morning following she passed through the ornate entry, her suitcase in her hand, stepped into a waiting taxi, and was borne quickly away.

BRASS COMMANDMENTS

Continued from Page 19

"Expect he'll be gone long?"

"I can't tell. Likely he'll be home to-morrow."

"H'm. There was a moment of silence. Gloria pressed her lips together and stared at the little man's back. She was about to speak when the little man turned.

"Seems like Lannon's commandments is doin' some good in the basin," he said. "Things has sort of quieted down around here."

She nodded quickly, and interest glowed in her eyes.

"H'm," said the little man. He shot one bright glance at Gloria's face, turned his head, and smiled enigmatically. "There ain't nothin' moved since Lannon burned them shacks over in the esche. An' killed them two Pardo men belonging to Campan's bunch. It's curious about that guy Lannon, now, ain't it?"

"Corwin," she said impatiently, "you're talking in riddles, I reckon. What's curious about Lannon?"

"Wa'al, I don't know, exactly. Every-

thing about him is curious, I reckon. He's sort of odd. Seems to run his own game a heap. He's got a big outfit over at the Boque Grand.

"There's plenty of guys over there which would be glad to throw a gun for him most any time, an' with mighty little provocation. But Lannon don't call on 'em. He fans it around the country by himself. Look at what he done to Campan. Takin' chances with a sneak like that! Givin' him a chance to pull his guns. I was right close to the post office that night. I seen the whole thing. I was leavin' Blanchard's store. I'd come out once an' had gone back to get another seegar. Steppin' out I seen a gang in front of the post office. Campan was stuck up. Seems like Campan was intendin' to pull the noise down. When I see him he had his hand raised. He kept his hand there. Then I seen Lannon standing in the middle of the street. His hands was hangin' at his sides. I heard him call to Campan. Campan turned around. His face was dead white. Lannon told him to draw, an' he did. But

Lannon didn't draw till Campan had got his gun out. Then he bruk Campan's wrist an' tore half his face off. Workin' two guns! I never seen such shootin'."

"What gets me is why he'd let Campan off that way without killin' him. I've heard a story about somethin' that happened one night at Benson's. Seems you was mixed up in that some way?"

"Corwin, I don't want to talk about that."

"Sho. Wa'al, I reckon that's settled. But I didn't know but what Throne was mixed up in it some way."

"Corwin, what do you mean?"

Gloria had heard that Lannon had had trouble with Throne. Rumor intimated that the trouble had been over a woman, but she had heard no woman's name mentioned in connection with the incident.

"What do I mean? Wa'al, I reckon I mean just what I said; I didn't know Throne was mixed up in the deal with Campan an' Lannon. I noticed that when Lannon came into Blanchard's he had a mean look in his eye; an' when Throne began talkin' about you that look was a whole lot meaner. Gentlemen, I never seen a man with a meaner eye. He steps right up in front of Throne an' says in a tone of voice:

"Throne; stand up!"

"Throne done so. An' Lannon hit him. He pulled Throne to his feet an' hit him again—an' some more. Then he stood watchin' Throne. Then he says, 'Throne, if I ever hear you speaking Glory Stowe's name again, I'll kill you.' An' I reckon he meant it! He stood there—"

"Jeff Corwin, you don't mean to say that quarrel was over me?"

"Sure as you're born," grinned Corwin.

"Throne mentioned my name?"

"How could Lannon tell him not to mention your name again if he didn't mention it once. Tell me that, Glory!"

"Corwin, you're not making any mistake about it? You were right there; you heard Throne talking about me?"

"I reckon."

"You're sure you didn't hear that from some one, instead of seeing and hearing it yourself?"

"I reckon I seen it an' heard it, Glory." Gloria's face was now very white, and her eyes were very bright. Her lips were pressed tightly together.

"Corwin, what did Throne say about me?"

"It was a thing that a man ain't got no business sayin' about a woman," replied Corwin, uneasily.

"Corwin, you've got to tell me!"

"My memory ain't very strong on that point, Glory. Throne talked, an' Lannon hit him. But what Throne said don't seem to stick in my mind right close."

"Corwin, you're going to tell me what Throne said. I can tell by your eyes that you remember. You don't want to tell me for fear of hurting my feelings. You can't hurt my feelings. I've got over that. I've got another reason for wanting to know. Corwin, I must know. You've got to tell me. Do you hear?"

"I don't remember Throne's exact words, Glory. He said somethin' about Devake an' you bein' alone here in the hotel; somethin' about you wantin' to be alone with Devake."

Gloria smiled strangely. She leaned her elbows on the counter and looked at Corwin with eyes that seemed to hold a fierce joy. Her cheeks were now glowing with color; they were redder than Corwin had ever seen them. The girl seemed to palpitate with exultation; there was wild delight in her face.

Corwin watched her; amazed at the sudden change in her. The transformation was wondrous, inexplicable. Doubt, awe, seized Corwin. He was oddly embarrassed. She seemed to be overjoyed to discover that Throne had talked about her. She should have been angry. If she had raged, Corwin would have felt that things were pursuing their natural course. A woman ought to be enraged over a story such as he had told her. He had expected her to be indignant. Instead, she seemed delighted.

Corwin's brain grew muddled; his confusion shone in his eyes. It was strange about women; they never did what one expected them to do. They were contrary, contradictory. Amazingly so. Corwin wanted to ask questions, but he felt that if he did he would make mistakes. So he kept silent and wondered. And at last when he observed that Gloria was not paying the slightest attention to him, he got up, sidled toward the door, reached it.

"Wah, I reckon I'll be goin', Gloria," he said.

Understanding that she did not hear him, he stood for an instant, watching her wonderingly. He did not speak to her again, but went out of the front door, wagging his head from side to side.

magnificent head, and heaved a great, tremulous sigh. He had done his best to fulfill his master's demands.

Lannon was across the veranda of the hotel in two or three light leaps. As Polestar came to a halt Lannon had seen a light in the office of the hotel; and when he reached the threshold of the big front door the black guns leaped into his hands. Devake, he felt, would be inside. Devake would be clever enough to conceal his intentions toward Gloria until the moment he intended to act. Devake was the kind that played the hypocrite before striking.

Lannon stepped stealthily down the big hall. There was no sound from the office. The light streamed from the office into the hall, and it seemed to Lannon that there was something ironical and mocking in the silence. With a conviction that he had arrived too late, and his face flaming with a terrible rage, he stepped into the archway between the big hall and the office, the big guns rigid in his hands.

One sweeping, inclusive glance revealed to him a scene of peace and apparent tranquility.

Devake was not there. Apparently he had not been in the office. The big lamp suspended from the ceiling seemed to flicker benignantly, the elk-head above the mantel seemed to watch him with stoic curiosity, as though mildly wondering at his warlike appearance.

Also, Gloria Stowe was watching him, steadily, with amazement. She was standing behind the counter; she had

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CHAPTER XXIV

OUT on the plains west of Bozzam City a gray shadow raced, followed by a continuing dust-cloud. There were spots where scarcely any dust arose; there were other places where it ballooned upward heavily. Any one, watching the progress of the gray shadow, would have thought of a ricocheting shell touching infrequent corrugations of a level. The gray shadow thundered out of the west, passed over the vast level, and vanished into a wide depression eastward. Only the dust of its passing could be seen rising above the depression, dust that traveled with amazing swiftness. Then the gray shadow reappeared on a distant ridge, a leaping silhouette against the silver sky-line; then it had vanished again. Later it was a mere speck on a far level, diminishing, swallowed in space.

Along a ridge near Bozzam City Polestar was astonished to feel the sting of the spurs on his flanks. He had been doing his best; he now had discovered that his best had not been sufficient. He gathered his sinews for a mighty effort and was gone from the ridge in a smother of dust. He saw lights flickering ahead of him; they came up magically; he flicked past them as lightly as a leaf in the wind. Then a knee-press warned him. He stiffened his body, braced his legs, and slid almost on his haunches for a distance of 30 feet to a halt. He felt the reins drop over his head; the weight left his back; he got his legs under him again, set them a-sprawl, dropped his

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been leaning upon it, for she was now rubbing her elbows as though long contact with the wood top of the counter had numbed them. She looked at the guns in Lannon's hands, then up into his eyes, her own probing his as though to ask the meaning of his threatening manner.

"You expecting to shoot somebody, stranger?" she asked.

"Is Devake here?" he asked shortly. He ignored her sarcasm. The cold earnestness in his voice was unmistakable. Gloria knew from his words and manner that he had come to kill Devake, that for some reason he had expected to find Devake in the hotel.

"Devake ain't hyeh; he hasn't been hyeh. It's mighty curious you should come in hyeh looking for him, stranger! Devake ain't in the habit of coming hyeh!"

Bitter disappointment gripped her; a wave of anger surged through her. Only a little while ago, leaning upon the counter, she had figured it all out, had provided an explanation for Lannon's attack on Throne. She had misinterpreted Lannon's manner toward her during the ride to Bozozam City after Ellen Boeworth had left her; she had thought that Lannon was like all the other men of Bozozam City who had attempted to take liberties with her; she had been so certain, like the rest, that she had come to believe, his advances would not be unwelcome.

His action in slighting her in the presence of Ellen Bosworth had seemed to prove that his thoughts had that trend, and when he had laid his hand on hers, telling her at the same time that he "wanted" her, she had been sure his thoughts were dishonorable.

But when Corwin had told her about his whipping Throne for talking about her she had been equally certain that she had misjudged him. Now she felt there was another motive behind his action in whipping Throne—jealousy of Devake! He had burst into the hotel office, his guns in hand, looking for Devake, asking for him! It was evident that he expected to find Devake in the office with her!

Not answering her he wheeled, strode down the long hall, peered into the dining room and the kitchen, and then returned to the office. Gloria confronted him outside the counter, where she had quickly stepped to watch him as he had walked down the hall. Her face was white with rage; her eyes were blazing with the fierce resentment she felt for his insulting suspicions.

"Stranger," she said, "for a few minutes I was pretty near convinced that you could be a regular man, if you tried hard enough. I see I was mistaken. My word that Devake wasn't hyeh wasn't enough for you. You're a miserable, suspicious critter, and I want you to get out of hyeh right this minute!"

He sheathed his guns, stepped close to her. Despite her anger she was fascinated by the cold light in his eyes.

"I don't know what you are trying to get at," he said shortly. "This isn't a time for nonsense! If Devake isn't here now he'll be here later. He sent your dad away in order to have you here alone. He's going to kidnap you!"

"And you rushed right in byeh expecting to find him doing it?" she scoffed.

But there was a queer break in her voice, which betrayed her fear that he was speaking the truth, that there was foundation for his apprehension. Yet her resentment would not permit her to let him see that she was inclined to believe him; so she laughed scornfully into his eyes.

"I reckon you're imagining things, stranger," she said. "There ain't no one going to kidnap me. Dad's gone over to Laskar on business. That's true. But nobody's going to kidnap me, and don't you forget it! I'm mighty grateful to you for rushing in here to warn me."

"Glory, Devake means to do it. That is, he planned to do it. He won't do it now, because I'm going to kill him on sight. It pleases you to scoff and ridicule. You are like a good many others in this basin; you don't believe I am in earnest."

"You've been mighty unfortunate in making me believe you are in earnest." She tried to laugh, to show her contempt of him, but the bitterness in her eyes made the forced mirth sound hollow and insincere, so that he looked keenly at her.

He smiled wryly at her, touching his cheek with a finger, pointing to where her quirt had struck him, leaving a white welt that was still visible.

"Evidence of your earnestness," he said. "I reckon I deserved it. There will come a time when I will prove mine."

"To Ellen Bosworth. I reckon," she said, her cheeks reddening. "According to you, she's the only lady in the basin."

"I respect Miss Bosworth, Gloria."

"Stranger, I've told you not to call me that! I'm not 'Gloria' to you, and I never will be! A girl like Ellen Bosworth is the only kind you can respect. She's eastern, like you, and she knows how to talk to men. And she knows how to make them behave to her without hitting them in the face with a quirt!"

Lannon had a flashing glimpse of the agony in her eyes, but almost instantly the emotion was whelmed by defiance. She regretted striking him: she had regretted the action during every wakeful moment since. The white mark on his cheek had its counterpart in her heart; she felt the pain of it as she looked at his cheek, and she would have given any-

thing to undo what she had done. The deed had been the result of her inexperience and of the furious passions that raged within her, passions that she was ashamed of, that awed her. She felt that had she been reared like Ellen she would have been able to suppress her passions, would have been able to suppress Lannon with a look or a word as effectually as she had suppressed him with a quirt.

There was a strange, leaping light in Lannon's eyes as he watched her.

"You're always going to be 'Gloria' to me," he said. "Words or quirks will make no difference. I respect Ellen Bosworth; I respect you."

"I'm not asking for your respect, stranger!" she declared, defiantly. "I don't want it! I can get along without it!"

There seemed to be no reason for the wild resentment that stirred her at this minute. Her better judgment told her that he did respect her, regardless of the slight he had put upon her. She had known all along that he had given her

the real reason for his sin against her; she had seen the truth in his eyes more than once.

She knew he had meant no wrong when he had tried to take her hand that day on the trail; she knew what his motive had been when he had thrashed Throne for talking about her; she felt his earnestness at this moment.

But all this knowledge was subconscious; it was her calm judgment lying dormant behind the lashing sea of passion that tortured her. She felt it only instinctively, as a thing that ought to be. It was not a keen conviction, as was her belief that Ellen Bosworth was more worthy than she to be beloved of Lannon. She was aware of it, and that was all. But she knew Ellen deserved Lannon; she felt her own inferiority and could advance no valid reason why Lannon should choose her instead of Ellen.

She was not jealous of Ellen; she would have denied that! She was merely hurt; she was enraged over her own shortcomings, resentful because she lacked the graces of mind and body that would have made her as attractive in Lannon's mind as the eastern girl.

Lannon's hands came out suddenly and were laid on her shoulders. She trembled under his touch; her cheeks whitened. But she did not attempt to free herself of his grasp. She stood there looking straight into his eyes, her own ablaze with defiance.

"Gloria, you keep bringing Miss Bosworth's name into our talks. I have told you why I didn't speak that day; I've apologized for it. I respect Miss Bosworth. That's all."

"I reckon Ellen deserves your respect, stranger," she said steadily. "Well, you've given it to her. There's no reason why you should be telling me about it."

"There is, Gloria. I've tried to show you, since I was fool enough to do what I did in Miss Bosworth's presence, that I respect you as I do her. It's a mighty hard matter to get at because it's difficult to make you believe it after what I did. It's hard to make you believe I am sincere."

"It sure is, stranger," she said coldly; "I reckon I'll never believe you. There's no reason why I should. Besides, I don't want to believe you. Even if I did want to, I reckon I couldn't. You keep saying one thing and doing another."

"Stranger, you're two-faced. You keep telling me you respect me. Then you go riding with Ellen Bosworth and talk about me being 'impossible'!"

Lannon started; his face reddened. "Impossible" had been Ellen Beasworth's word applied to Gloria. Word of how Gloria had been seen riding with Ellen had reached him; vividly he now recalled Ellen's strange manner that day, her bantering, her veiled sarcasms, the polite ridicule in her voice. He even remembered Ellen's word: "She is interesting, I suppose. As an untutored child of the desert she is diverting. As a type, that is. As an individual she is rather impossible. don't you think?"

He recalled his reply to that; he had told Ellen that he considered Gloria "raw gold." He had meant that as a compliment. He could not be certain

about Ellen's reasons for having twisted his words about, in imputing to him things she had herself said, but he felt she must have been amusing herself with Gloria or maliciously revenging herself upon him for his defense of the girl. Yet he could not accuse Ellen of deliberately lying about him.

"Gloria," he said earnestly. "I never said that. Miss Bosworth is mistaken."

Gloria laughed scornfully.

"I reckon she ain't mistaken, stranger. Your own face tells me that. You look guilty. I ain't going to listen to any more of your lies!"

She wrenched herself free and stepped back, her eyes seeming to snap with disdain.

"You gub out of hyeh now! I'm going to close up. You've been trying to ride straddle ever since you come hyeh. You talk big and you do darn little. Maybe you're fast with a gun and maybe men are scared of you. But you can't fool me! You're a sneak with women! You don't mean anything you say to a woman! It's likely you've come hyeh tonight telling me that tall story about Devake intending to come here just to hev an extra good talk. I can't tell me about you, about how you've been fooling around eastern girls. Stranger, you can't make a fool of me!"

Lannom had been watching her, observing the flashing of her eyes, the proud curving of her lips, which were quivering despite the great effort she was making to appear calm. Over him as he looked at her surged a wave of longing, a yearning to take her into his arms and tell her that he had loved her from the day he had first looked into her eyes, that it made no difference to him what anybody had said or what he had done, and that her attitude at this moment only made her more desirable to him.

The mood was not to be resisted. He stepped forward; his arms went around her. She was drawn toward him, surprised into passivity. For an instant she lay quiet within his arms, while he kissed her fiercely upon the lips. Then, setting her down, he spoke, while she stood at a little distance from him, pallid, so furiously angry that her wonderful eyes seemed like two blazing pools of wrath.

"There," he said vibrantly, "I've done what I've wanted to do since the first time I saw you. Some day I'll be doing it again. I'm going to make you love me!"

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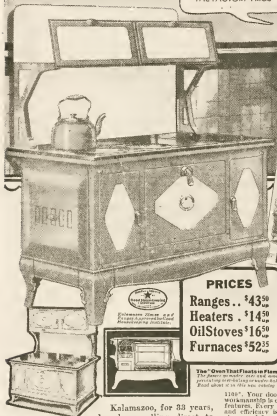
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